

Speculative Philosophy



Donald Phillip Verene



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DONALD PHILLIP VERENE



LEXINGTON BOOKS

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ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK

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A division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200

Lanham, MD 20706

Estover Road

Plymouth PL6 7PY

United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Verene, Donald Phillip, 1937–

Speculative philosophy / Donald Phillip Verene.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7391-3659-1 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-7391-3661-4
(electronic)


1. Philosophy. I. Title.

BD41.V47 2009

100—dc22

2008056106

Printed in the United States of America

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

In memory of

Ernesto Grassi

(1902–1991)

and

Giorgio Tagliacozzo

(1909–1996)

THUS have I, in Obedience to your Commands, ventured to expose my self to Censure in this Critical Age. Whether I have done Right to my Subject, must be left to the Judgment of the learned Reader: However, I cannot but hope, that my attempting of it may be an Encouragement for some able Pen to perform it with more Success.

Jonathan Swift, *A Trritical Essay
upon the Faculties of the Mind*

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Preface

In a footnote to the preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant claims: “Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit.” Reflective critical thinking is the slogan of modern philosophy. Whether practiced as deconstruction, analytic metaphysics, or critical theory, philosophy stands by this slogan. We wander in the Dantean dark wood, sorting out truths from error, and then, because for every argument it is not beyond human wit to create a counter-argument, resorting them. Critical thinking is driven by a fear of error. It is unable to complete its own process because there is always more to criticize, including the most recent conclusion that criticism has produced. As criticism, philosophy is always threatened by fatigue. Its reasonings offer no final illumination or relief. Advancing and evaluating arguments is a necessary and natural part of philosophy, but is it all of it?

In a few lines in his preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel defines the form of thought and expression upon which philosophy, he claims, properly rests. He calls this the *speculative sentence*. The speculative sentence, *spekulativer Satz*, is an extraordinary discovery in modern philosophy. It ranks in importance with the discovery in ancient philosophy of the Socratic question as the means through which philosophy can be produced. The Socratic question allows us to bring any aspect of human experience before the mind and consider its being and its meaning. The formulation of questions makes the mind dialectical, moving it from one perspective to another, one question to another. The speculative sentence turns this series of perspectives back upon itself, revealing its pattern of self-development. The ancient pursuit of the question, joined with the power of expression framed in the speculative sentence, gives philosophy its fullest range of thought.

The speculative sentence has within it a circular motion, in which the meaning of its subject term is found in the connection of the subject term to its predicate,

but once this connection is grasped, the meaning of the predicate term must be taken against the subject, and the meaning of the subject reconceived. A further sense of the subject then emerges, to be expressed in a predicate. The circular motion is self-contained, yet it is always passing beyond its present state to a greater comprehension of the meaning it contains.

Hegel gives the example: “God is being.” The predicate appears to be something substantial into which the subject dissolves. But that is not the intention of the sentence. The predicate is to state the essence of the subject. When the predicate is brought back to bear on the subject, God ceases to be a fixed subject, and is grasped anew. Hegel gives a second example: “the *actual* is the *universal*,” the actual as subject disappears in its predicate. The universal is not meant to have merely the significance of a predicate, as if the proposition asserted only that the actual is universal; on the contrary, the universal is meant to express the essence of the actual.” Reflective, critical thinking thus loses the firm objective basis it believed to be in the subject. The project of such thinking—to collect and classify the contents of experience in a fixed order—is overcome once this internal movement is realized by thought.

The inner form of the speculative sentence is dialectical, a doubling-up, a twice-reading that continually expands upon itself, offering greater and greater spheres of meaning, approaching the grasp of the whole of things. The product of this process is the True grasped as the whole. It is grasped in a grand narration that does not aim at sorting out true from false assertions but aims at showing how all assertions are both partially true and partially false. Like Hesiod’s Helicon Muses, who sing both true and false songs and so provide us with the art of expression, the speech that arises from the speculative sentence lets us put the world together in thought. The art of the speculative sentence, like the art of the Muses, allows us to pass from the dialectic of partial truths to proclaim the greater truth of the whole that contains them. To speculate is not to speak in a fanciful way or to think in an unfounded way apart from experience. To speculate, as a way to embody the love of wisdom that distinguishes philosophy, is to attempt to meditate and narrate the whole of things in a way that satisfies reason in its connection with sense, imagination, and memory.

Philosophy pursued as speculation excludes neither reflection nor analysis. Both of these are required in speculative reasoning. But speculation also requires a willingness to risk imperfection. The narration of the True as the whole leaves behind the security that critical reflection and analysis offer. Critical reflection and analysis keep very tightly to those aspects of experience that can be understood, that can be ordered and classified. To speak about the whole the philosopher must stand common sense on its head and attempt what is in principle impossible—to glimpse the whole of experience from within experience, to have the divine perspective.

Critical reflection and analysis are forever comedic, which is part of their attraction. They always have present in principle the happy outcome—that their efforts will allow them to sort out truths from errors. Speculation is always melancholic because its task, in principle, cannot succeed. In principle, thought can never attain a vantage point outside experience and grasp it as a single object that can then be captured in speech. Yet not to undertake the task of speculative thinking is not truly to engage the power distinctive to the human being—reason. To restrict reason to critical reflection and analysis is to restrict the human.

Philosophy that produces the speculative narrative inherent in the power of human reason is part of high culture, and has been so since the time of Plato. Philosophy is part of the world of arts and ideas that make any culture a truly human culture. Philosophy, like the world of arts and ideas, is not for the many but the few. In the world of nations not everyone has interest in the fruits that leisure and contemplation bring, nor need everyone have such interest. Century after century, most people do not pursue the activities of high culture. They pursue material comforts through work and spiritual comforts through entertainments and religions. In generation after generation, countless individuals also find themselves in societies and situations in which any personal pursuit of the leisure of high culture is inaccessible, not even imaginable.

All cultures contain systems of wisdom, but not all pursue a world of arts and ideas in which philosophy develops. Philosophy as an invention of Greek and European culture has never disappeared in the twenty-five centuries since its inception. It has always been preserved as a part of high culture. High culture is high because it involves those uses of the senses, imagination, memory, and reason wherein human beings deliberately and sustainedly attempt self-knowledge—to grasp what is distinctly human in an ultimate way. High culture is motivated by a sense of the absolute, the ways in which what is absolute in experience—the True, the Good, and the Beautiful—can be imagined and thought.

Speculative philosophy should not be considered as simply a revival of Hegelian philosophy, although Hegel is the most complete source for it in modern philosophy. Its roots in Great Britain and the continent include the philosophies of T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, R. G. Collingwood, Rudolf Hermann Lotze, Benedetto Croce, and Henri Bergson. In Russia they include Nikolai Berdyaev and the pre-Revolutionary philosopher, Vladimir Solovyov. In America speculative philosophy has its sources in the writings of Josiah Royce and in the nineteenth-century St. Louis Hegelians, such as W. T. Harris, George Howison, Denton Snider, and Henry Brockmeyer—who titled their journal, the first philosophical journal in America, *Speculative Philosophy*. A. N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, the primary text of process philosophy, begins with what Whitehead terms "The Speculative Scheme." In the latter half of the twentieth century speculative

philosophy was pursued by Charles Hartshorne, in his extension of Whiteheadian metaphysics, by Brand Blanshard, in his idealism, and by J. N. Findlay, in his combination of speculative and phenomenological philosophy in *The Discipline of the Cave*, *The Transcendence of the Cave*, and his essays in *Ascent to the Absolute*. More recently speculative philosophy is represented in the writings of Robert Neville and William Desmond.

The essays that follow are various ways of regarding philosophy as it exists within human culture. They concern the philosophy of culture and the culture of philosophy. They draw repeatedly on the major sources of my own philosophical thought—Vico, Hegel, and Cassirer, accompanied by other sympathetic thinkers, such as Collingwood and Whitehead. I add to these one major literary figure—James Joyce.

In these essays the reader will find there has been a deliberate attempt at repetition of major themes and claims. Each essay stands on its own and can be read as such, but taken together they share ideas. The reader will encounter the same idea more than once, often cast in a different perspective. I think philosophical books should be a pleasure to read, at least for those prone to pursue wisdom. I also think major ideas need to be approached and re-approached, from various directions. Repetition is an integral part of the philosophical sense of truth. A truth loses nothing by being said more than once. Truth, as narrative, not deductive, is always a twice-told tale.

My intention is to instruct, delight, and move, and in so doing to encourage the reader of these words to think through the issues individually. In this way it may be possible to revive the spirit of speculative philosophy in an era in which it is all but lost in the movements of Anglo-American analysis, continental hermeneutics, post-modernism, applied ethics, gender and race theories, and so forth. These forms of professional philosophy are enormous distractions to the philosophical mind because they are so gratifying and engender so much social approval.

Philosophy always suffers from a lack of respectability and always yearns for it, allowing the pointer on its compass to be pulled in so many directions that it risks losing its true bearing. This true bearing is to allow the human being and human culture itself a means to look completely at itself—to see things whole.

These essays are meta-philosophical. They present a philosophical position but they do not present a system of speculative philosophy. Philosophy by its nature takes itself, its own existence and nature, as a problem. Speculative philosophy in particular is self-comprehending. More so than the critical or analytic spirit, the speculative spirit seeks to say what philosophy is. These essays approach philosophy as a kind of ultimate literature, a literature focused on what is absolute in human experience. Philosophical activity is essentially literary activity in the sense that philosophy depends upon the word, spoken or written, to

conduct its pursuit of wisdom. Philosophy, like poetry, aims to take language to its limits, but unlike poetry, philosophy attempts, in this process, to join imagination to reason.

In one of the philosophical passages of *Finnegans Wake*, at the beginning of the third chapter of the first book, James Joyce includes the line “to tickle the speculative to all but opine” (50.13–14). It is the only time *speculative* occurs in the *Wake*. Here it is linked with Nicholas of Cusa, who appears as Micholas de Cusack, and with Giordano Bruno of Nola, who appears as Padre Don Bruno, both of whom Joyce regards as precursors to Giambattista Vico, who appears throughout the *Wake* in many guises, including “the producer (Mr. John Baptist Vicker)” (255.27). Vico can be identified with the protagonist of the *Wake*, H. C. E., Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Here Comes Everybody, and Vico, like Earwicker, is the “*Courser, Recourser, Changechild*” (481.2).

Joyce associates the speculative with the mutuality of opposites. “To tickle the speculative” is to see how everything and everybody is a “twone” (3.12): “Now let the centuple celves of my egourge as Micholas de Cusack calls them,—of all of whose I in my hereinafter of course by recourse demission me—by the coincidence of their contraries reamalgamerge in that identity of undiscernibles . . .” (49.33–50.1). Like Cusanus, Bruno is a master of opposites: “alionola equal and opposite brunoipso” (488.9). Within his own identity, his “egobruno” (488.8), Bruno is opposite: “Bruno at being eternally opposed by Nola” (488.10–11). Vico’s solution to opposites is to be the master of the cycle of what is “whorled without aimed” (272.4–5) but which “annews” (277.18). Joyce reverses the order of historical influence: “a jambebatiste to a brulobruno!” (117.11–12). Vico’s speculative opine accomplishes the solution to the problem of opposites by his *corso* and *ricorso* of events such that “all of whose I in my hereinafter of course by recourse demission me.” The speculative always requires this sense of the dialectical structure of experience. With dialectic comes the sense of repetition. The speculative is like a song and no true song is sung only once.

Hegel makes one momentary appearance in the *Wake* as “hegelstomes” (416.33) in the famous Ondt and the Gracehoper sequence of the third book. Joyce’s reference to Hegel is preceded by the question: “Had he twicycled the sees of the deed and trestraversed their revermer?” (416.30–31). This question of the twicycled and the trestraversed, of the two-in-the-one-in-the-three, sums up Hegel’s project of a science of the experience of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. These and so many others are Joyce’s literary formulations of the speculative sentence in which he turns litter to letter to literature and back again. The philosopher, to begin his dialectic, must first sit in the poet’s chair.

Although philosophers must go to school with the poets, philosophical thought always aims at something more than poetry can provide. For the speculative philosopher this something more is not literal-mindedness but, as Whitehead

holds at the end of *Modes of Thought*, it is mathematical pattern. Poetry can provide meter but only philosophy can provide an ultimate sense of pattern that can satisfy reason. Even if we hold that true philosophy is never written down, because the nature of things is always just beyond the power of language to represent it, we write down this claim. What philosophy itself is, is never fully stateable, yet our access to it requires the use of language.

There are seven themes that take on various forms throughout this work: (1) that the True is the whole; (2) that philosophical argument requires grounding in philosophical narrative; (3) that philosophy is a kind of humanistic literature, governed by the Muses; (4) that philosophers must go to school with the poets; (5) that philosophical systems necessarily employ the principles of composition of classical rhetoric for their expression; (6) that philosophical systems are theaters of memory; (7) that self-knowledge is the aim of speculative philosophy.

Philosophies are, in the end, written for philosophers. The purpose of speculative philosophy is the Socratic pursuit of the Delphic *gnothi seauton*, of self-knowledge. The self can turn back upon itself only speculatively. It cannot attain a vision of itself through a critique of its own actions or an analysis of the empirical basis of them. Speculative philosophy, whether presented in objective or subjective style, is autobiography, an art of self-writing in which the philosopher comes to see what being is and, in terms of it, what the human being is, including the individual life as governed by the love of wisdom.

A critic may ask whether in all these pages their author has ever truly defined speculative philosophy. As I recall, Louis Armstrong was once asked, "What is jazz?" He replied, "If you got to ask, you aren't ever going to find out." The speculative spirit is necessary to speculative philosophy. It is a way of coming to philosophy, a sense of things. The spirit is not in everyone. But when it is present, philosophy is musical.

I thank my colleagues at Emory and at various other universities for their helpful readings of this work in manuscript: Thora Bayer, Ann Hartle, George Benjamin Kleindorfer, Donald Livingston, David Lovekin, George Lucas, and Frederick Marcus. Philosophical thought always requires friends. I thank Molly Black Verene, assistant director of the Institute for Vico Studies at Emory, for all her work and advice in the preparation of this book.

Introduction: On Philosophical Tetralogy

Vico's Authors

In writing about philosophy it is so easy to pass into the intellectual world of G. W. F. Hegel's *das geistige Tierreich*, his "spiritual 'zoo'" in which the professors pretend to have interest in each other's work, "but actually their eagerness to come and help was itself nothing else but a desire to see and exhibit *their* own action." Hegel says they are "just like naughty boys who enjoy *themselves* when they get their ears boxed because *they* are the cause of its being done."¹ Giambattista Vico connects this to the wider state of modern society, in which we live in "a deep solitude of spirit and will, scarcely any two being able to agree since each follows his own pleasure or caprice."² The philosophical conversations that were held among the ancients were no longer possible, once René Descartes set the agenda of the solitary thinker caught up in the certainty of the *cogito*. All need for the agora was gone, once Immanuel Kant incorporated Descartes' insight into the island of the Understanding, in which the knower can apprehend representations as *my* representations and "so can comprehend them as synthetically combined in one apperception through the general expression, '*I think*.'"³

Four principal authors have come to guide my work. Most of the work that follows concentrates on three of these—Vico, Hegel, and Cassirer. The fourth author, James Joyce, is mentioned in several places and has appeared above in my preface. Joyce is the poet whose ghost haunts these discussions. He based *Finnegans Wake* on Vico's *New Science* in the way he based *Ulysses* on Homer's *Odyssey*.⁴ My conception of four authors derives from Vico.

Vico spoke in Neapolitan and wrote in Latin and in Tuscan, the language of Dante that became what is now known as Italian. He lived all his life in Naples, in residences on or near the system of streets, called *spaccanapoli*, that cuts

through the city. He was born in via San Biagio dei Librai, the street of Saint Blasius of the booksellers where his father kept a small bookshop. Naples is a palimpsest, a tablet written over many times, with the erasures from each of its ages still showing through below each layer of stones.

Vico left Naples only once, to tutor the children of the Rocca family in their castle at Vatolla, in the mountains of the Cilento, a three-day carriage ride south of Naples. There, at the age of eighteen, reading under the trees, Vico became an autodidact, working his way through the library of the nearby convent, Santa Maria della Pietà. While there, on learning of the stigmatization and subsequent imprisonment in Naples by the Inquisition of three of his friends, he decided on a lifelong plan to befriend the church authorities and thus appear harmless to them.

Although he sometimes traveled from Vatolla to Naples and Portici during the nine years spent in the Cilento, Vico finally returned to Naples as “a stranger in his own land.”⁵ He returned to find that although his attachment to eloquence and the humanist ideal of putting wisdom into words had not changed, all his surroundings were determined by a barbarism of the intellect, of reflection and flattery (which is the language of reflection applied socially). Great thoughts and great speech had disappeared into the medium of Cartesianism. Aristotelian metaphysics, as he reports, had become a laughing-stock; everyone was concerned to be up-to-date, instead of erudite and eloquent. Self-knowledge was abandoned for theory of knowledge, a condition that has persisted until our own day. The philosopher, under these modern conditions, need become educated in only a few things—principally, what has just been discovered and declared. All sense of origin is put aside. The past becomes unintelligible and of little use, even as a source. Greatness of mind becomes a rarity, recognized, if at all, as folly or as the production of “odd ideas.”⁶

In describing his education Vico designates four authors who were the most basic sources in shaping his mature thought.⁷ They are part of the providential order that directs the genesis of his thought. Vico’s four authors are Plato, Tacitus, Francis Bacon, and Hugo Grotius. They are two pagans and two heretics. These four fall into two groups: ancients (Plato and Tacitus) and moderns (Bacon and Grotius). Each of these pairs mirrors Vico’s distinction between the philosophical and philological.⁸ Plato and Tacitus, Bacon and Grotius stand to each other, respectively, as philosophical to philological thinkers. Philology for Vico is the study of the customs, laws, languages, and deeds that prevail in the world of nations.

In presenting his four authors, Vico relates the occasions that led him to discover each and to make each a basis of his thought, but he does not explain why he has these particular four authors or why he has four authors and not more or less. In presenting them as his authors, Vico has arranged the source of his ma-

ture thought as a tetrad. *Tetralogy* in Greek originally is a term used in oratory to refer to a group of speeches (*logoi*) that are delivered in a lawsuit. In certain cases, in the law courts of Athens, the accused and the accuser were each allowed two speeches. Tetralogy is connected with the Attic orator Antiphon, famous as a logographer, a writer of speeches for others. The writing of tetralogies is based on the sophistic art of arguing not from the evidence of witnesses but from the probabilities of the case.

Vico may intend that his four authors are his logographers, the writers of his own speech. His aim is to consider the advantages of both the ancients and the moderns.⁹ In Vico's case the speaker is the civil wisdom of the ancients, whose two speeches are those of Plato and Tacitus. They present the speeches of the accused. The speeches of the accuser are those of the modern conceivers of civil wisdom. Bacon and Grotius, unlike Descartes and John Locke, are moderns who grasp the wisdom of the ancients in modern terms. Vico's speech is that of the ancient-modern, the virtuous pagan who acknowledges the truth claims of each. His speech of the *New Science* combines all four corners of the tetrad—the vertical movement between the philosophical and philological and the horizontal movement between ancient and modern. Vico's *New Science* might be called the speech of the tetrad.

The Speech of the Tetrad

Once identified, the speech of the tetrad is an instruction to anyone who would follow Vico's advice to the reader of the *New Science*: to meditate and to narrate the science to himself. This is the proof, Vico says, that governs this science.¹⁰ The proof of this science depends upon imitation and repetition. Vico asks the reader to don the mask of his science. Imitation here does not mean the production of a mere copy. To accomplish the act of proof of the science requires that the Vichian scientist make a version of the tetrad. In this proof Vico becomes one of the new set of four authors from whom the process of Vichian thought can go forward. It is an invitation to remake the science through its repetition by the reader.

The tetrad is by nature dialogic; it has an oppositional structure. In it there is the potential of the dialogue form, with the four thinkers as speakers. But the dialogue as a form of philosophy is gone with the ancients. Theirs was a world in which the spoken word had a true reality. That reality was based on the strong presence of memory in intellectual and civil affairs, as well as in the recitations of the rhapsodes. Something said could not disappear, as it does in modern speech. Something said could make its imprint on memory, and achieve permanence in the common powers of memory that any community of speakers

shared. But modern philosophy, born in the method of doubt, trades in the fallibility of memory. Significant speech can live only in the written and published text. The makers of myths, like children, excel in strong and robust memory. Traditional memory is communal memory. The modern truth-seeker is solitary and requires the memory of the published page, the published results of scientific thinking.

Within the dialogic conversation of questions and answers of ancient thinkers is the narrative, often appearing as the retelling of a myth or of the experience of a hero. This narrative survives among the moderns as history, and as the rhetoric of examples, among formulators of scientific theories. The narrative and the meditation appear to be present at the beginning of modern philosophy in the work of Descartes. But this is an illusion. In Descartes the narrative and the meditation of the cogito are a feigned speech, because they are not an act of memory. Descartes' speech in the *Discourse* and *Meditations* is feigned because in actuality it is a conceptual progression transferred into rhetorical form.

True narrative, like true dialogue, is lost to the moderns because the truth of the story is lost; the belief in the reality of the myth, the fable, is not possible once the world has been made rationally intelligible through doubt and the quest for certainty. Narration alone is not possible as the form of modern philosophy because it is only half of the ancient Socratic form of philosophizing, which always requires question and answer as its prelude and aftermath. Thus the form of philosophy, for the modern who wishes to recapture the original aim of self-knowledge, can be neither dialogic nor poetic. True narration must be connected with true meditation. Such meditation stands in the place of the ancients' use of the dialogue.

Meditation is not an act of moving through the world, as is narration; it is the act of fixing the mind on what is true about something within what can be narrated. Narration combined with meditation produces oration. *Ratio*, the proper listing of things, cannot stand on its own. It can take on the form of philosophical truth only when it enters into a bond with *narratio*. The combination of meditative thought and narrative thought produces *oratio*. In the oration the narrative is fixed around certain points. For the modern seeker, the source of ancient self-knowledge is to formulate ideas in terms of the oration. The oration is the natural form of rhetorical and jurisprudential thought. The philosopher becomes a speaker in the theater of the world of the Republic of Letters, or in the theater of the law court; therein ideas are to be judged, both rhetorically and rationally. The oration is recaptured from the Greeks and Latins by the Renaissance thinkers, especially from the Latin formulators of the Greek traditions. The oration is the natural form of self-knowledge, the form through which its truths can be brought forth within the modern world.

In connection with the oration as the form of self-knowledge, the letter must also be considered, for the letter is also a way of speaking. The history of letters runs from the ancients, from the letters of Pliny the Younger, and those of Cicero to Atticus—to Renaissance letters, such as Francesco Petrarch's *Letter to Posterity* and the *Letters* of Marsilio Ficino. As Count Lodovico says in Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*: "It is my belief that writing is nothing other than a kind of speech which remains in being after it has been uttered, the representation, as it were, or rather the very life of our words. . . . So surely the rule is that what is proper in writing is also proper in speaking; and the finest speech resembles the finest writing."¹¹ In orations we need only think of the influential *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, which was written to be spoken. In humane letters, speaking is the scene of writing, whether it is in the tradition of the type of letter which is meant to be a public document or in the eloquent oration.

The oration and the letter are the parents of the essay, such as those formulated by Michel de Montaigne, his *Essais*. The written oration is a speech imagined and spoken on the page. An essay in its true form has this sense of the presence of the author's voice to convey. The modern conception of the article or paper is a degenerate form of what begins in the Renaissance as the recovery of the oration from the ancient world. The article or paper aims at the anonymity of the author for the reader; it is a work that could be written by anyone. All style has been removed by professional training or by the universal principles of copy-editing, or both, so that thought begins to speak in a universal, generally undistinguished voice.

The article or paper eschews narratio and reduces oratio as much as possible to ratio—the production of an ordered set of points and evidences. Here eloquence—that ideal of a whole put into language—has no place. When eloquence is lost, then so is wisdom (eloquence being understood by the ancients as wisdom that speaks) and, with the loss of wisdom, prudence is lost (prudence being that wisdom that becomes naturally civil, that enters human actions and is distinctive of the citizen). In the article or the paper, thought becomes unwise and unlearned; thought loses the sense of the whole. The powers of digression, the epiphany, and the unexpected connection are not exercised. Ratio is allowed into human language without a keeper.

With ratio in the foreground comes the absence of passion. The rational anonymity of the article-paper makes it passionless; the reader sees just the skeleton of reason, an X-ray vision that leaves only the faint outlines of the body of the living words, each full of its own past meanings, each word remaining ambiguous and requiring erudition by the reader. The hollow reader examines the X-ray for defects. The oration is an embodiment of passion because it wishes to

move the reader toward intellectual or moral virtue, to produce insight, to have the self confront the self. The philosophical oration takes the reader back to the first wisdom of the Seven Sages—Know thyself. The self, through its power of language, attempts to enter itself, its own reality. Self-knowledge requires passion. The oration, as a form of self-knowledge, involves both animus and anima—it requires both tongue and heart.

Among the moderns, the orality of memory exists no more; thought is owned by the written word. We moderns must attempt to recover the word as active. The reader can recreate the text by the same principles by which it was composed. Vico speaks of a threefold method of reading—to read first for the meaning of the whole of the work, then to read to grasp its transitions, and finally to read to absorb its manner of expression.¹² This way of reading corresponds to the three phases of composition of an oration—*inventio* (the discovery of materials), *dispositio* (their arrangement), *elocutio* (their formulation in language). In this way the reader recomposes what the author has said and enters the author's world, the inner writing of the author's thought. Such reading is based on imitation and on repetition—the two great principles of real learning. A true oration, full of passion, moves the reader's passion. Once moved, the reader's passion seeks its own object. The economy of this production is governed by prudence. So moves the Republic of Letters within itself, and it is never far removed from the larger world of civil wisdom.

The Reader's Tetrad

To remake Vico's science the readers' own voices are required. One of these, for me, must be Vico himself. The reader's speech, like Vico's, takes place under the condition of the barbarism of reflection, and the purpose of the speech is to free the reader from the conditions of reflection. Reflection is unsuitable as a mode of philosophical knowledge of the human world because it must treat the human world as an object, toward which thought can be sent and then returned—*reflected*. Reflective thinking is a false form of self-knowledge. Reflection acts as though the inner being of the knower can be reached by the self forming a concept of its being—by the self simply turning its conceptual powers of thought back upon itself. In this the self takes itself as no more than an object to be fixed in thought. It does not enter into its own inner reality.

Self-knowledge, which is the opposite of reflection, requires that the self speak out the being of its inner life—to put into language its own reality. Reflection makes us think of a mirror of thought. With this mirror, thought reflects the surface of an object that is there to be seen, both in its immediacy and as a reflection of thought. Speculation—a word that I wish to associate with self-

knowledge—is a mirror of a different sort. *Speculum* can be a mirror that allows us to see what otherwise we could not see at all. *Specio, specularē* is to spy out, to see what otherwise is not to be seen. In the speech of self-knowledge, the nature of the self is seen unveiled, is revealed, not reflected upon.

In the speculative speech of self-knowledge, the oration the self makes is an attempt to reveal its own nature to itself. In true speech, there is the attempt to see within—to spy out what is truly there, to grasp the reality that is making the words. In reflective speech, the self is an object that is immediately apprehended and that must then be formed in thought. In speculative speech, the self is present both immediately and mediately in its speech, in the way that the face is present in the mask. The good eye is required to see both at once, and in their own dialectical relationship. Reflection is useless in this process of self-knowing; all it can do is to seek the appearance that it then wishes to form with its powers of conception. Reflection is the basis of critical philosophy, which seeks the principles of right reason in order to sort out the appearance from the thing-in-itself, the certain from the uncertain. Speculation is topical philosophy, seeking the beginning points that will produce a true speech. Without the true speech, all criticism is blind.

The reader who has absorbed Vico's sense of self-knowledge in an age of the barbarism of reflection must make a speech that contrasts the lost origin against the present condition. Such a speech places the ancients against the moderns; more specifically, it concerns how to balance the one against the other. To speak simply on behalf of the ancients is to engage in intellectual nostalgia, and to speak in only a modern way is simply to be in the present. Barbarians believe only in the present; antiquarians believe only in the past. The modern seeker of self-knowledge must have logographers who have balanced the origin against the present. They must be thinkers who have mastered the interrelations of mythos and logos. Mythos loves the origin and logos loves what has moved out and forward from the origin. Logographers must begin their love of wisdom with *verbum*, not *res*, with the primacy of word over thing: the word is the access to being.

My tetrad of logographers has taken me a good twenty years to discover: Vico, Hegel, Cassirer, Joyce. With each is associated a particular work. Hegel and Cassirer are heroes of the logos. Each has attempted to connect logos to myth. Hegel is the hero of the concept as internally full of motion, as a device of dialectic and speculation—Hegel's so-called concrete universal or *Begriff*. His work is the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Cassirer is the hero of the symbol—the attempt to grasp the concrete concept as a cultural phenomenon through the principle of symbolic form. His work is the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*.¹³ Hegel and Cassirer are moderns who attempt to approach the origin through logos.

Vico and Joyce are heroes of mythos. They attempt to recreate the origin, not simply to begin from it and they incorporate some of the reality of the

origin in their thought. Vico is a hero of the *universale fantastico*, of the “imaginative universal,” the primal sense of metaphor that he sees as the master key to his *New Science*.¹⁴ Joyce is a hero of the epiphany (Latinized Greek: *epiphania*) and the trope of irony. His work is *Finnegans Wake*, in which language is manipulated to allow a vision of language itself, the communal sense of humanity that underlies all particular languages. Joyce’s work is a series of epiphanies, of showings of the divine or the unseen.

As mentioned above, Vico’s tetrad is:

Plato	Bacon
Tacitus	Grotius

My tetrad, then, is:

Hegel	Vico
Cassirer	Joyce

They are ordered in pairs, from general to particular. Thus Hegel’s *Begriff* is made more specific by Cassirer, in his notion of the symbol. The symbol is an embodiment of the *Begriff* as a cultural form. Vico’s *universale fantastico* is formulated by Vico as an idea, a way to take thought back to its origin in the language of the body. Joyce’s ironic and epiphanous use of language is an attempt actually to write the reader back to the language of *universali fantastici*, to allow the reader to experience, through breaks in language, the original insights of human language itself. Joyce attempts through his irony and his puns to create a fantastic language in our modern world of reflection. What governs all four authors is that “the True is the whole” (Hegel) and that “the whole is really the flower of wisdom” (Vico), that “self-knowledge is the highest aim of philosophical inquiry” (Cassirer), and that the key to self-knowledge is what is “fabled by the daughters of memory” (Joyce).¹⁵

Philosophy as Tragicomic

There is a second conception of tetralogy: it is a term used for a group of four connected plays. In ancient Greek theater these consisted of three tragedies followed by a satyr play. If this is applied to my four authors, Vico, Hegel, and Cassirer are authors of the tragedies and Joyce is author of the satyr play. The satyr play was a burlesque of a mythical story, perhaps with a chorus of men with horses’ tails and ears. Joyce’s play is the whole mythical story of humanity and, as he insisted, it is a work of humor, full of jokes: *in risu veritas*. Joyce once described himself as “an Irish clown,” and he referred to *Finnegans Wake* as “a great joke.”¹⁶

Vico, Hegel, and Cassirer are each tragic in the sense that their heroic efforts to make the complete philosophical speech are not successful. Their heroic ef-

forts are not fulfilled, and the outcome is melancholy. Cassirer's philosophy of human culture never overcomes its intellectual distance from the actual passions and life of culture. Hegel ends the *Phenomenology* with the image of the Golgotha of spirit, spirit unable to complete its original aim, to make the love of wisdom into actual wisdom. Vico's *corso* and *ricorso* is a continual pattern of gentile history, in which the divine lesson of providence must be begun over and over, never to be successfully learned. Joyce's *Wake* takes us back to the satyr play, but not simply as a matter of comic relief. It instructs us in irony, coincidence, and the limits of rationality. Philosophical speech is neither purely tragic nor purely comic. It is best described as tragicomic, a speech that oscillates between both of these poles.

Although an analogy can be made with literary tetralogy, the legal tetralogy is perhaps the most appropriate, and the sense of the tetrad that seems most to apply to Vico's original delineation of four authors. In this regard Vico is the modern Antiphon. Vico is the first logographer in the court of history, whose speech of accused and accuser is a single speech, comprising both philosophical and philological speech. Each of these sides purports separately to command the truth about the human world, but as readers of Vico we must listen to both. We, as readers, are the hearers in the court of the great city of the human race, attempting to discover its jurisprudence. By studying Vico's speech we can learn to make our own. Vico's speech is the model for us to imitate and to attempt to repeat.

Vico, Hegel, Cassirer, and Joyce are each the makers of their own speech. But Vico's four authors is an instruction—to combine their speeches into the new proof that Vico recommends the reader make individually. The speech of my philosophical position becomes the combination of all the elements from these four. But each reader must aim at his or her own tetrad of logographers that will appear within the providence of his or her own career of thought and reading. The authors must select the reader; the reader cannot simply select them in a single act of decision. In effect, the reader of Vico who realizes the power and necessity of the tetrad must try out various authors in order eventually to sense those who have already written the reader's speech. Any other process is meaningless, because authors artificially chosen can never truly speak to the hearer in the court of humanity and the Republic of Letters. In other words, the four authors must be discovered, not simply decided upon or chosen. The four authors must visit, like the Muses. They are the certainties, to use Vico's term, from which the reader can make a true speech.

The tetrad is a structure of opposites, of the two-in-the-one. The four authors can be seen as paired vertically, horizontally, and diagonally. In each case they are a two-in-one, the one being the fact that each pair is a coincidentia oppositorum. The tetrad is a conception of multiple dualisms, dialectically held in

connection with the other, but the tetrad is not itself a fifth thing, something over and above the combinations of opposites. The opposites of my four authors, that determine my speech of the whole, are: concrete concept, symbol, metaphor, epiphany. As these oppose each other, accused to accuser, the configurations of my speech are determined. The problem is to speak between each of their pairs and also among all of them.

Conclusion

My master of English philosophical style has always been R. G. Collingwood, and I have always held that his logic of question and answer is the key to philosophy, far more than argument. Anyone can argue, but few can ask the right questions.¹⁷ So far as I can see, to do philosophy requires only two things: the question and the metaphor. All the rest is extra. When anyone endorses poetry and mythos as strongly as I do, the group of philosophers in the corner begin to mutter, to raise the specter that this will turn philosophy into poetry. They worry how we will be able to tell the difference.

There is no philosophy without metaphor. So get used to it. The metaphors are always there, just look with a good eye. What keeps philosophy from becoming poetry is the logic of the question. Once the question is introduced, the immediacy of the metaphor is broken, and the metaphor becomes a guide, but it shows us the sights that the question requests. We never know what these sights are, until we ask. If we turn too quickly to argument we become like crows, cawing at language. No *copia*. No eloquence. No style. And as A. N. Whitehead says, style is the aim of education and “the ultimate morality of mind.”¹⁸ The whole fails first our minds and then our words.

It is always a temptation, in philosophy, to violate Vico’s second axiom, to make the unfamiliar familiar¹⁹ in order to say: “There, I’ve figured that out.” “It’s just what we thought it was, all along.” “Another example of what we already know.” There is always a temptation in philosophy to accept only what is clear, what can be arrived at critically and supported by argument and evidence, to believe in hermeneutics.

But just when we thought that critical philosophy and hermeneutics had finally taken charge and speculative, topical philosophy had been successfully pushed aside, we notice the following disturbing sentence affixed to the wall of the academy:

Forget!

Our wholemole millwheeling vicociclotometer, a tetradomational gazeboctoticon (the “Mamma Lujah” known to every schoolboy

scandaller, be he Matty, Marky, Lukey or John-a-Donk), autokinatonetically preprovided with a clappercoupling smeltingworks exproressive process, (for the farmer, his son and their homely codes, known as eggburst, eggblend, eggburial and hatch-as-hatch can) receives through a portal vein the dialytically separated elements of precedent decomposition for the verypetpurpose of subsequent recombination so that the heroticisms, catastrophes and eccentricities transmitted by the ancient legacy of the past, type by tope, letter from litter, word at ward, with sendence of sundance, since the days of Plooney and Columcellas when Giacinta, Pervenche and Margaret swayed over the all-too-ghoulish and illyrical and innumantic in our mutter nation, all, anastomosically assimilated and preteridentified paraidiotically, in fact, the sameold gamebold adomic structure of our Finnius the old One, as highly charged with electrons as hophazards can effective it, may be there for you, Cockalooralooraloomenos, when cup, platter and pot come piping hot, as sure as herself pits hen to paper and there's scribings scrawled on eggs.²⁰

Staring at Joyce's imagination, the hermeneutical practitioner's eyes slowly cross as they see a world that is not made for doing academic business, for filling in all the gaps with exposition. The critical speech of the part rather than the whole thinks by forgetting, by leaving things out, and sees, if at all, by lamplight. The speech of the whole thinks with memory and sees in the daylight, with the good, metaphysical eye, the "scribings scrawled on eggs."

CHAPTER 1

The Canon of the Primal Scene in Speculative Philosophy

Canons and Argument

Canons are models or standards. By nature a standard makes a distinction between two realms—the true and the false, good and evil, the desirable and the undesirable—between what meets the standard and what does not. In particular fields of knowledge or in common conduct, canons or standards are established by tenacity, authority, a priori reasoning, or scientific inquiry—in effect, by those means that Charles Sanders Peirce analyzed as ways of fixing belief.¹ The special concern of philosophy is with fundamental canons. A philosophical canon must be “archaic”; it must be the bearer of its own justification. Although canons that are derived from other more fundamental canons play a role in the total complex of philosophical reasoning, canons that are in some way first are the distinctive concern of philosophy.

A canon in philosophy, as I wish to understand it, is a first principle. I wish to understand principle in its root sense as beginning, as what is primordial. It is a scandal to logic that logic cannot establish the principles from which it conducts its reasonings. Logic and metaphysical reasoning that is built on logic as its model can offer the justification that first principles must be known by self-evidence. The rationalist and empiricist share the notion of self-evidence as the justification of first principles; they differ only on the meaning of self-evidence. For the rationalist self-evidence is what is self-evident to the mind separated from the senses. For the empiricist self-evidence is what is plain to the senses. For both these alternatives logic is an instrument with which to reason from first principles. Logic brings no justification of itself with it, except the unrefutability of the law of non-contradiction. But logic has no metaphysical content for this principle.

Both the rationalist and the empiricist, the two great alternatives of modern philosophy, believe in the centrality of argument as the means to philosophical truth. Argument holds both of them in its arms and they never consider leaving its mighty embrace. Each new argument washes clean the memory of the argument just passed; its new vivid truth replaces the vivid truth of the previous argument. So woolly is the embrace that the advocates of argument never catch on to the fact that argument is by nature antinomous, that is, as in Kant's antinomies, there is an equally good counter-argument for every vivid argument. This is a point known to every rhetorician, but forgotten or never known by every logician and metaphysician who builds truths on logic. The hope of the final argument springs eternal.

This eternal hope is furthered by the miracle of resurrection because old arguments, forgotten in the history of philosophy or never studied, frequently live again in the eternal present of argumentative philosophers who innocently repeat arguments unknown to them, often from medieval scholasticism or Hellenistic philosophy. Argument is so much taken for granted as the means of philosophy that to abandon argument in the age of reason appears to have the same peril as to abandon faith in a religious age. Dante's instruction to abandon hope, "Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate,"² takes on secular meaning. Yet if we enter at least the beginning of Dante's *Inferno* that houses the virtuous pagans, we find these ancient rhetoricians, humanists, and philosophers speaking with one another in a marvelous way, in their ancient tongues. Their voices have a wonderful ring to them that is quite removed from the sound of contemporary argument. Noise is the medium of contemporary consciousness. Argument, as I mean it here, is noise in philosophical exchange.

Is there an alternative to argument, logic, and self-evidence as the form of first principles or canons in philosophy? Can argument be argued down? By what faculty of thought could philosophical speech become musical and relieve the noise of argument? These are the questions I wish to raise. And to answer them I wish to inquire into the connections among speculation, myth, and music. To accomplish this I wish to oppose the idea of principle as an axiomatic starting point of thought, to the idea of principle as origin, as referring to the primordial moment of consciousness.

The Speculative Sentence

At Hegel's "Bacchanalian revel" at which not a member is sober, language is musical.³ The revel, *Taumel*, is the primordial scene of the whole at which everything can be said, at which all songs are sung. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the story or narrative of the experience of consciousness, its hopes and illusions,

as they are played out upon the total stage of its life, in what Desiderius Erasmus earlier called the theater of mortals.⁴ Each form of consciousness has its moment, speaks its language, shows its folly. Hegel, the historical magician, with a wave of the wand moves to the next scene. The comedy these mortals enact has at every moment a sadness about it, because the play as a whole is a tragedy—philosophical consciousness, like Oedipus, on discovering its true identity to be absolute knowing, goes blindly to its life of exile in the abstractions of the *Science of Logic*, losing the multicolors of the great theater of the *Phenomenology*. It is a great narrative governed by Clio and Calliope.

In his letter of May 1805 to Johann Heinrich Voss, on his desire to teach philosophy to speak German, Hegel compares his task to Voss's translations of Homer and the Bible.⁵ Hegel's *Phenomenology* is the combination of the Greek and Christian narratives of homecoming and adventure—the *Odyssey* and the pilgrimage of salvation. *Geist* travels home on its circular path, its "highway of despair," and at the same time it makes its pilgrim's progress toward the salvation of the Absolute, the moment of Calvary. For *Geist*, *fahren* is *erfahren*. Hegel the Greek; Hegel the Christian. In one sense there is no progress in the work, only a circle, and, as Hegel says, a circle of circles.⁶ In another sense there is progress toward the point at which consciousness comprehends the whole theater of its stages and understands the conditions of its salvation. The *Phenomenology* ends with the reader at the point of divine wisdom which is at once Greek in the sense that the ancient philosopher knows he is like a god, as Pythagoras originally described him, and Judaic-Christian in that the whole of the *Phenomenology* is only a cosmological argument and not the production of the divine itself. God still remains separate from his creations, the *Geister* of the paraphrase of Schiller's poem, with which Hegel ends the work.⁷

What is Hegel's canon in the *Phenomenology*? And what is its faculty of enactment? The canon of Hegel's narrative is what he calls *der spekulative Satz*, the speculative sentence.⁸ How are speculative sentences formed? In the speculative sentence what is meant is located first in the subject and then what is meant is transferred to the predicate, only then to be brought back for its meaning against the subject. This two-step is philosophical thought itself. Speculation, not reflection, is the master key to Hegel's dialectic. Reflection is the companion of argument. Like argument, reflection operates at a distance from the object, forming it and judging its essence through an independent standpoint of thought. Speculation captures in thought the inner life of the object. To speculate is to follow in language the inner movement of consciousness, to narrate the inner life of the object. Speculative thinking is mimetic thinking.

A speculation is like a suggestion in ordinary speech. Like a suggestion it opens up the inner life of a situation. A suggestion is neither a description nor a prescription. Unlike a description, a suggestion does not simply state what is the

case, but like a description a suggestion must be grounded in the true nature of a situation, or it is not suggestive. Unlike a prescription, a suggestion does not state what ought to be done, but like a prescription, a suggestion points to a course of action to be taken, otherwise it would have no power of suggestion. Despite the intense activity of examining language in contemporary philosophy, no serious attention has been given to the logic of suggestions, which I am suggesting is the basis of philosophical narrative present in Hegel's speculative sentence.

In what is the speculative sentence grounded? What faculty produces it? It is produced not by reason, but by memory, or more correctly by recollection. This faculty is more clearly named in German as *Erinnerung* because the German term captures the sense of the inner distinctive to this sense of memory. Narrative depends upon memory. Narrative is the natural form of the expression of memory. Speculation presupposes recollective memory. What is to be formed in the speculative sentence must first be brought to light in the thinker from cultural memory.

The theater of mortals of Hegel's *Phenomenology* is quite similar to what the Renaissance thinker Giulio Camillo called the "theater of memory," an edifice in which the visitor could attain a knowledge of the whole of the world by attending to the mythical structures, symbolisms, and forms of consciousness depicted around him in archetypal images. These forms, which Camillo describes in *L'idea del Teatro* (1550), brought to the individual's own *mens* all that was already present in the divine *mens*.⁹ In the *Phenomenology* the individual recollects what is already wrought in consciousness and re-experiences it in the language of the work. Joyce, the greatest twentieth-century user of memory, quoted with approval Vico's dictum that "memory is the same as imagination."¹⁰ Imagination understood in this sense makes Hegel's narrative of the life of consciousness a work of the imagination, not in the sense of presenting something unreal, but in the sense of seeing the invisible in the visible and making the sensation into an image. What is apprehended by the senses at a prior moment of consciousness is recalled as an image brought forth from inside the mind and made to live within the spirit's discourse with itself.

I have suggested to this point that true philosophy is narrative in form, not argumentative. The narrative is achieved by the speculative sentence, not critical reflection. Truth can never be established by argument because for every argument there is an equally good counter-argument. Truth never emerges from a dialectic of yes and no. Argument is an example of what Hegel to another purpose calls *schlechte Unendlichkeit*, bad infinity.¹¹ Narrative is true infinity because it recalls what is actually there and through the power of the image it gives it life within the life of consciousness, which in the text of Hegel is transferred to the reader.

The Primal Scene of Divine Intervention

There is a sense of first principles that is missing from Hegel's *Phenomenology*. What is missing is an account of Hegel's starting point. The *Phenomenology* just begins—with sensation. What might be understood as a primal scene comes not at the beginning of the work but at the beginning of the stage of self-consciousness well within the first part of the work, at Hegel's famous stage of *Herrschaft* and *Knechtschaft*. This stage of masterhood and servitude may approach a primal scene of the self in struggle, in which its being is born through fear. This may account for why it is the most remembered stage of the *Phenomenology*. It is an image of the birth of the self in fear. But for a sense of canon as primal scene I wish to turn to a second example—the primal scene of the naming of Jove in Vico's *New Science* (1730/1744).¹²

Jove is the primary example of Vico's conception of *universali fantastici*, imaginative universals.¹³ Like Hegel in his account of self, Vico understands the primary emotion of beginning to be fear—*Furcht*, *spavento*. In fear all is born. One thinks of Thomas Hobbes's statement of his own birth “fear was my twin,” his mother having been frightened by the arrival of the Spanish Armada. The fear that naturally attends individual birth, for Vico, also attends the birth of a nation, *nazione*, a term that itself means birth, to be born (*nascere*). It is fear that causes the first men to generate Vico's three principles of human society—religion, marriage, and burial.

What are the dimensions of Vico's primal scene, against which all of society and thought must be understood? As the world dries out from the universal flood over two centuries, the air becomes dry enough for lightning and thunder to occur. The races of the sons of Noah, the offspring of Ham, Japheth, and Shem, become giants during these centuries and wander the endless forests of the earth, their mental powers receded into their great bodies to the point that for them thought has become sensation. They live in the momentary world of the senses, all body, without true thoughts. They copulate at their inclination and, according to Vico, their offspring increase in size by inhaling the vapors of their own excrement, the nitrous salts that now lay upon the earth. Some of such giants survive today in remote regions such as Patagonia.

As the earth dries and the sky clears, clouds form and lightning and thunder occur for the first time. This new experience produces the new emotion of fear in the *giganti*. They have never had cause to fear before. This is a fear that shakes their whole being, and their bodies tremble in imitation of the trembling sky. Their fear causes them to flee into caves and hide their bodily functions from the eye of the sky. Their fear causes them to take the first baths and make the

first marriages. Their fear causes them to form the first thought. Their sensing of thunder as an external object causes the internal sensing of the emotion of fear. This internal sensing causes their mental power of internalization—imagination or *fantasia*—to form the thunder as a god, as Jove—Jupiter Tonans, Jove the thunderer. Jove is the first name, a sensuous particular formed as a universal meaning by the power of the image. The imaginative universal is sensation formed as a kind of thought. Once Jove is named, all can be named, and the world is full of gods. The *giganti* live for the first time in a world. Through the Jove-experience earth is separated from sky; there is a division in being that produces a world. The sky is Jove's body and as his body shakes, the giant's bodies shake in their fear. For the first time, something *is* where previously there was only the momentariness of sensation. Every nation, Vico says, has its Jove.

The gesture of shaking establishes a mimetic identity between Jove and the giants. This produces *is*, in the sense of being. But *is* is always also a relation, a copula. The running into caves is an indicative gesture. It is an act of pointing out something other to which the giants have a relation. Jove both is and is in relation to something. Jove both is being itself and is a particular sense of being, different from the being of the giants. Jove must be comprehended and this comprehending is the act of taking auspices, by observing Jove's actions in the sky. The conditions of dialectic are established in the double sense of *is*, achieved in the two primordial gestures of fear and flight. These conditions are carried over into the act of taking auspices, which involves a dialectic of the present against past and future.

The fear that is controlled by the pursuit of auspices is the basis for religion, the first principle of humanity. As Lucretius and Petronius both say, religion is born in fear.¹⁴ For Vico this is also true, but religion becomes a positive force of social order. Marriage, the second principle or beginning, is generated from the modesty that the giants feel toward their bodies as they copulate in caves out of sight of the eye of Jove, and form the first marriages. Burial, the third principle, is the placing of the dead body out of sight in the earth.

Once the mind is activated through its primordial power of *fantasia*, the body must be disciplined, and in fact the giants, through generations, begin to decrease to normal body size as their minds increase in capacity to form experience. Those who can take the auspices of the actions of Jove the thunderer become the founders of families. Those giants who do not originally respond to the divine and develop knowledge remain half-bestial—*famuli*—and eventually become dependent upon the founders, who clear the great forests to establish first altars and then cities.

The Muses

How is this primordial scene a canon in philosophy? In his explanation of his method in the *New Science*, Vico says that the decisive proof of his science is for the reader to meditate (*meditare*) and narrate (*narrare*) this science to himself. The reader is to make the truth of this science in his own mind as what “had, has, and will have to be,” (*dovette, deve, dovrà*).¹⁵ Vico makes this claim twice in a short space, explaining that it is his method of proof. In saying this Vico is quoting the famous dictum of the power of the Muses, whose mother is Memory. As Hesiod says in the *Theogony*, the wisdom of the Muses is that they can sing of things that were, that are, and that are to come.¹⁶ The nine Muses were born from nine nights of fornication by Jove with Mnemosyne (Memory), their mother. These magnificent daughters govern the arts of humanity. It is said that they can sing both true and false songs and that when they will they can sing true songs.

How do the Muses govern the humanists that follow their various arts? As Jove lay with their mother, so the humanist must lie with the Muses. Together they extend the sacred act of fornication and the offspring are the songs the humanist can sing. The humanist’s access to Memory, which he requires for any production, requires the seduction of her daughters. But her daughters are by their nature prone to seduction and its pleasures. It is a most reassuring occupation.

The original art of humanity—of singing of what was, is, and is to come—is transferred from Jove himself through Memory to the Muses. The Muses then transfer it to the poets, who formulate the myths that express the auspices taken by the fathers of the first families, who are themselves poets. The poet and seer is the same person that later becomes the philosopher and producer of speculative thought. The poets learn the art of the myth from the Muses through their pleasant fornications. The myth always gives a knowledge of the whole. As Hegel says: “Das Wahre ist das Ganze” (“the True is the whole”).¹⁷ The philosophers must let their senses go to school with the poets to learn this art lost in the primal scene. The truth of what the philosopher says depends upon it being provable by the narration of it as what was, is, and is to come. As F. M. Cornford explains in his *Principium Sapientiae*, the philosopher is connected with the figures of both the poet and the seer.¹⁸ Plato’s quarrel with the poets and with the sophist, the *sophos* or “wise man,” is an act of transference of these roles to the philosopher. From these Plato creates the new figure of the philosopher—the lover of wisdom—whose love of the Forms gives him a new wisdom of what was, is, and is to come that imitates that of the gods. Because of this the philosopher

is dangerous to the state. The philosopher can love something more than what the state can offer.

Repetition, not reflection, is the key to philosophical truth. This is repetition in the sense of the ability to repeat the truth that is originally formed in the true story of the myth. The philosopher imitates the divine truth, the actions of providence in the world, through the language of the philosopher's account of the whole. Philosophy, like poetry, and like the Muses, is Memory because memory is all that there is. The repository of memory is language. In the word lies all that there is or ever can be. Both poets and philosophers are makers of the word (*poiein, poiētēs*). From the Muses is learned "musing" (*moosthai*), the art of searching with words. All words are the product of memory because all words have etymologies. Memory lives in language. The philosopher takes the reader through an account of the whole back to the primal scene, to the original meaning of words (what Vico calls the "mental dictionary") and repeats in different words the true story, the *vera narratio* that is there.

Speculation is recollection. The philosopher's problem is the recollection of the primal scene in which all that ever was, that now is, and that ever will be exists. The speculative presentation of the true as the whole requires that there be a primal scene of the bacchanalian revel behind it that informs its speculative level of presentation. The meaning of the words it uses are ultimately there in the songs of the revel itself. It is in this revel that Memory, the Muses, and the gods meet with the seers, poets, and philosophers.

How does dialectic fit with this knowing of the Muses? The dialectic of the speculative sentence with its movement from subject to predicate and back upon the subject, parallels the Muses' structure of was, is, and is to come. Dialectic is a true method in philosophy because it is tied to the first canon of knowing in the world—the taking of auspices that becomes the form of humanistic knowledge, as it is passed on to the poets. The method of myth is repetition; myths are told and retold. Their truth is in their retelling. Myths demand to be repeated. Myths are the original structure of memory. Speculation is the art of recollection, the demonstration that events can be not only recalled but recalled artfully, as a dialectical movement as captured in the speculative sentence.

Behind the speculation is the story. The language of the story, especially the tropes of metaphor and irony, breaks forth into the discourse of speculation. As Collingwood says, in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, the style of philosophy is prose that is interrupted by poetry.¹⁹ The canon of poetry is that of the Muses. The canon of philosophy is the same, but transferred into dialectical structure. The decisive proof of a philosophical presentation of the whole is its repetition as a narration made by the reader that satisfies the dictum that what it contains was, is, and is to come. When language can fulfill these conditions it is musical.

Myth and Music

Vico says that the words of language were first sung.²⁰ What the taking of the first baths were to the body, the singing of the first songs were to the mind. Water always sings—brooks babble. The primal scene of the human singing in the bath: water and song. Speculation is the act of thinking the inner motion of the object. This inner motion is musical; speculation, like song, has a movement that builds on itself and presents us with a whole. Compared to this sense of motion, reflection and its companion, argument, are noise. Reflective language cannot be melodic because it is built in pieces. It can give us one piece of itself at a time, like blasts from a horn, but without melody.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, in the first volume of *The Raw and the Cooked*, his introduction to a science of mythology, says that myth and music are denials of time.²¹ Taking this as a clue, we can say that the myth and the song deny time because they are based on the form of knowing of the Muses of what was, is, and is to come. The knowing of time is its denial. The knowledge of the whole always allows for the mastery of time. Speculation is a denial of time because it is derived from myth and music.

Vico speaks of the *barbarie della riflessione* (barbarism of reflection) as a final stage of cultural thought, in which there is a solitude of spirit and will that produces a language of flattery and abstraction, very like the type of language that Hegel associates with the stage of self-alienated spirit of the *Phenomenology*.²² Hegel's philosophy is based on speculation, not reflection. Reflection and argument are abuses of the true canon of philosophy because they cannot offer the knowing of the whole as speculation can. The separations in the whole made in reflective philosophizing are like noise—pieces of sound that do not comprise the movement necessary for a song. Reflection and argument are bound to time and to a-musical thinking. This is because the beginning points or principles for such thought are always arbitrary. They do not share with speculation the canon of the primal scene in which time itself comes into existence.

The canon of the primal scene is both mythical and musical because the language of this scene is like the language of a song. The song is the primordial form of expressing the inner motion of being. A further sense of the word *canon* is a song in which its different parts take up the same subject, one after another. This sense of canon as song, on the account I have here developed, is tied to the sense of canon as principle. In the act of speculative expression each part of the subject is drawn forth from the other parts. Vico says that the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables was at one time sung by children while playing.²³ Before the law was thought it was sung. In a similar fashion, the basis of the speculative sentence is the line of the musical canon.

There is a final question that has doubtless haunted the reader whose patience has taken him or her to this point. Does not the above account reduce philosophy to poetry? How can anything be known to be true in philosophy on this account? Is any formation of a speculative truth as true as any other? These are indeed the questions—the quest for the true—that lead from poetry to philosophy. Every individual who first experiences truth in poetic form is led by the same route of the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* from poetry to philosophy and, it should be added, led by Plato back again, as he confronts the reader with the Myth of Er, a form of thinking that he seemed to have just excluded from philosophy.

The Muses sing both true and false songs. The philosopher is concerned to sing true songs, or at least to sing the false only in relation to the true. The Muses can sing true songs when they will. What makes the Muses decide to sing truly? If this can be learned from them then the philosopher has the necessary canon for truth. We can eliminate reflection as the road to truth because it does not sing at all. This much has been gained, for to teach reflection to sing would be like teaching a dog to sing. Dogs are taught to sing in a musical howling, but it is not in their nature.

How is song the final canon of philosophical or speculative truth? We are back to Vico's decisive proof, that he who meditates and narrates to himself by that principle that it had, has, and will have to be has the proof of that principle. The Muses sing of what was, is, and is to come. Vico transforms this into a necessity, as what had, has, and will have to be. Vico's philosophical narration is to be a true song. The true songs of the Muses must be those that can be sung and re-sung. Fatigue eliminates the false. When a true song is sung we wish to hear it again, because each time it is sung we hear more. More and more can be drawn from it. It is like hearing language for the first time, or first experiencing thought. The truth of the philosophical speculation must be made and remade. As Hegel says, his thought is a circle. Repetition is the key to speculation and dialectic. The end takes us back to the beginning again, so that it, like a song, must be re-sung, re-narrated, to discover further its meanings. This process can be continued with any philosophy until it is worn out and no longer speaks. But if it is a great philosophy it will continue to speak, to resurrect itself. Philosophies without true inner strength become exhausted in time. They are overcome by time and fail to have within them the power to deny time. Philosophies without the inner strength of truth are not refuted. They die of fatigue. Philosophies in fact exist in time in this manner. It is not a matter of deciding how they should exist.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show that there is one canon in that type of philosophy that considers the true to be the whole. This canon is based on the primal scene

which generates the art of auspices—of comprehending what was, is, and is to come through the observation of Jove. This art is passed directly from Jove to the Muses through his fornication with Memory, their mother. The Muses pass this to the poets by their many fornications with them.

The art of the Muses is to sing both truly and falsely. Myth and music govern the wisdom of the poets. The poets pass their wisdom to the philosophers in the ancient series of seer, poet, philosopher. The art of reading what was, is, and is to come emerges in the form of the speculative sentence, the language of dialectic. Dialectical speculation depends on the primordial forms of myth and music that are present in the bacchanalian revel, which always inform the quest for the whole. Speculation is myth in its drive to comprehend the whole and musical in its sense of following in language the progression of the inner life of the object. The canon of the primal scene produces the mythical, musical, and the speculative in which the beginning is always united with the end.²⁴

CHAPTER 2

Philosophical Pragmatics

Speculative Rhetoric

In the *Phaedo* Socrates says: “hoi orthos philosophountes apothneskein meletosi” (those who rightly philosophize are practicing to die).¹ This is repeated later in the dialogue, where Socrates is describing the soul. He characterizes philosophy, when pursued in the right way, as “melete thanatou” (practice of death).²

There is to my mind no more interesting claim in the history of ethics and pragmatics. My purpose here is to consider the significance this claim has for understanding ethical and philosophical life. My intention is not to interpret the *Phaedo* as a dialogue but to use Socrates’ claim as a little text in itself, in ways that may or may not fit into an interpretation of the larger text of the dialogue. How does the Socratic claim provide the basis for philosophical pragmatics? What can be meant by the term philosophical pragmatics? What implications does this have for a philosophical ethics? These are the questions I wish briefly to consider.

I wish to use the term *pragmatics* in the sense of that branch of semiotic that deals with the relation of signs or linguistic expressions to their users as distinguished from semantics and syntactics. The sense of pragmatics as that area of semiotic that studies the effects of signs or words on their users was first delineated by Peirce and later taken up by Charles Morris.

Pragmatics, I think, is related to another conception of Peirce, what he calls “speculative rhetoric.” He uses this term in a short paper which remained unpublished until thirty years ago.³ Peirce distinguishes speculative rhetoric from “speculative grammar” (a term which he takes from Duns Scotus) and “speculative critic.” These, respectively, study the ways in which an object can be a sign and the ways in which a sign can be related to the object it represents. Speculative rhetoric is the

study of “the indispensable conditions of a sign’s acting to determine another sign nearly equivalent to itself.”⁴ Peirce intends the term *speculative* in the original Greek sense of theoretical.

The conception of communicative ethics developed by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas can be regarded as a development of ideas in the field of Peirce’s speculative rhetoric that Peirce himself left undeveloped.⁵ Peirce says that “an entirely new sign can never be created by an act of communication, but that the utmost possible is that a sign already existing should be filled out and corrected.”⁶ According to this view, a theory of communication can be developed by showing how ethical standards are not arbitrary in a community but have a kind of objectivity that is comprehensible in terms of a theory of communication.

I wish to apply the concept of pragmatics reflexively to the philosophical life itself rather than to extend it to the theory of a general communicative ethics. The application of speculative rhetoric to philosophy itself is not discussed by Peirce, who, in the above-mentioned piece, distinguishes between a rhetoric of fine art, a rhetoric of practical persuasion, and a rhetoric of science. There is not only a philosophy of rhetoric but a rhetoric of philosophy.

Ernesto Grassi has shown, perhaps more than any other thinker, that philosophical reasoning is fundamentally based upon the rhetorical power of language. The boldness of his thesis is brought out in the title of his book, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*.⁷ Grassi shows that there is a form of speech on which philosophical argument depends. There is a speech that produces the *archai*, from which all reasoning can proceed but which reasoning itself cannot produce. Logic, which supplies the principles of reasoning, including metaphysical reasoning, cannot supply its own beginning points. These beginning points, however, are given in the form of linguistic acts that are conceivable in terms of rhetorical analysis, not logical principles. The rhetorical devices of metaphor, invention, *similitudo*, and so forth, characterize the *archaic* speech that philosophical reasoning requires. This speech of beginnings is characteristic of the ancient *sophos*—the wise man who leads, guides, and attracts.

I have claimed above that there is a connection between pragmatics as described by Peirce as part of semiotic and his conception of speculative rhetoric. If pragmatics is the effect of signs or expressions on their users, then speculative rhetoric is a theoretic of these effects. Peirce’s conception of pragmatics and speculative rhetoric is more complicated than I have stated, as they are part of Peirce’s multifaceted philosophy. My aim is not to interpret Peirce’s theory of semiotic but to employ it as a partial route to what I mean by a philosophical pragmatics.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his essay “Über die Möglichkeit einer philosophischen Ethik” (On the Possibility of a Philosophical Ethic) states that in the ancient tradition, since Aristotle’s *Ethics*, philosophical pragmatics (*die philosophis-*

che Pragmatie) was itself a practical knowing (*ein "praktisches" Wissen*).⁸ Aristotle, as Gadamer points out, is just drawing out in this connection what is already present in the Socratic-Platonic doctrine of the knowing of virtue. In the ancient as opposed to the modern tradition, *theoria* is not separate from *praxis* but is the highest *praxis*. Gadamer points out that at the beginning of modern philosophy Nicholas of Cusa must put his deepest doctrine in the mouth of the *idiota* instead of the *orator* and *philosophus* with whom he speaks. The development of the modern natural sciences as the model of theoretical knowledge separates thought into theory and practice. Gadamer sees philosophical ethic as having only two ways open to it—that of the formalism of Kant or that of Aristotle.⁹

Is it possible to recover, from the ancient tradition, an understanding of philosophical pragmatics (understood as a semiotics) combined with a philosophical ethics (in which *theoria* is not divorced from *praxis*)? Philosophy as the love of wisdom is at once pragmatic and practical. Can philosophy re-understand itself as a special way of speaking and a special way of life? To do this philosophy must attempt to re-grasp the significance of Socrates' claim—that the profession of true philosophers is the art of dying. "Those who rightly philosophize are practicing to die" is a claim about the essence of philosophy. Philosophy is an activity which when done rightly (not idly or trivially) is practice to confront the fact of death.

Philosophy and Poetry

The scene of the *Phaedo* is Socrates' own act of dying—he who has practiced the best life shows how such a master dies. In his arguments to Simmias and Cebes in the dialogue, Socrates is shown practicing philosophy right to the end—combining the act of philosophizing with the act of dying. To claim that right philosophizing is practicing to die is not to say that the only subject matter of philosophy is death, but it is to say that whatever the topic under discussion, the true philosopher has applied himself to it because of his awareness of his own mortality. Death is the true subject matter behind every other apparent subject with which the philosopher is concerned. If the philosopher were a god and not a mortal there would be no urgency to reason about any problem. There is also another presumption besides this epistemic one—the moral one that the philosophical life is the best life, the only life in which virtue can be fully and truly pursued. Death, then, is what motivates human beings to pursue virtue and true ethicists will make dying their true concern and profession.

The Socratic claim, as I shall call it, is that the best human life is the philosophic (even if it is available only to the few) and the purpose of philosophy is preparation for death. The standard way this claim has been understood has been

that the true philosopher is a lover of wisdom, not a lover of the body, and since the philosopher cultivates the immaterial part of existence, the true philosopher will not be distressed at the prospect of dying. The philosopher will welcome the separation of soul and body that comes at death because he has striven to separate himself from the love of body as an ultimate all his life, as he has also turned away from a love of wealth and honor.

The above view is certainly part of the meaning of Socrates' claim, but I do not think it is all of it. In the beginning of the *Phaedo* Socrates says he has been composing poetry by adapting Aesop's fables and the Prelude to Apollo. He says he has been doing this to explore the meaning of the dream that has recurred throughout his life, telling him to "cultivate the arts." He has always regarded philosophy as the greatest of the arts, but now, while awaiting his death, he has been experimenting with poetry to see if this was the art that he should have been cultivating all along.

I think that Socrates' experimentation with poetry here must be understood within the Platonic corpus in relation to the quarrel with the poets in the tenth book of the *Republic*. I have in mind the passage where Plato takes advantage of the fact that *poiein* means both "to make" generally and "to make poetry."¹⁰ He speaks of that class of makers who make images of sensible things (poets and painters). The poet (*poiētēs*) is a maker of images through his power of words. The poet, like the painter, presents what for him are given realities. These are sensible things. The lover of wisdom, the philosopher, directs himself to the forms—the unseen that informs the seen. Is this the basis of the quarrel, the reason Plato would say that we should claim there is an ancient quarrel between philosophers and poets?

I think the quarrel is deeper than what is suggested above. Neither the poet nor the philosopher makes something tangible, as does the carpenter. Neither are they gods who, as Plato suggests here but nowhere else, may be the makers of the Forms.¹¹ Both the poet and the philosopher are makers of the word, that is, they are makers in and through language. What is their common form of making? Imitation. Both imitate in language. Their difference is not that poets imitate and philosophers do not, nor that poets make in images and philosophers do not (consider the constant use of metaphor and myth in the Platonic dialogues). One difference is that if we take Plato's dialogues and, specifically, Socrates' speech as the model of philosophizing, philosophy, unlike poetry, combines images (metaphors, myths, stories) with argument (dialectics, deductions, general reasonings). Thus if arguments were added to poetic making we would transform poetic thinking into philosophy.

But I do not think this is correct. We cannot pass back and forth from the poetical to the philosophical by the addition or subtraction of arguments in con-

nection with images. If the quarrel between philosophy and poetry in the *Republic* is taken together with the *Phaedo*, the reason poetry is not philosophy, nor philosophy poetry, is that poetry is not “practicing to die.” Why Socrates mentions his recent attempts at making lyrics and then turns from them, back to philosophy, is because the poetic is insufficient in the face of death.

Note in this passage in the *Phaedo* concerning poetry that Cebes, following the request of Evenus, asks Socrates why he has been composing lyrics, and Socrates, after answering in terms of his recurrent dream, concludes his response by telling Cebes to tell Evenus that if he is wise he should follow Socrates in death as soon as possible.¹² As Simmias says to Socrates: What a piece of advice! Socrates replies, “Isn’t Evenus a philosopher?” Socrates is also being ironic here.¹³ Irony becomes the device for introducing the definition of the philosopher as not fearing death as ordinary people do. Socrates then proceeds to make not poetry but philosophy. The *Phaedo* shows Socrates philosophizing on the last day of his life. On this day he enunciates what his special kind of making in language is about—it is a practicing to die. That is what it has been all along, previously and now at the end.

The poet is a lover of the body and not a lover of wisdom because poets are not practicing to die. If the poet imitates and the philosopher does too, what is the nature of philosophical imitation? The poet imitates the body; the fear of death is not confronted but put aside by a speech of the body. The philosopher imitates the god, from whom the philosopher is originally distinguished in Pythagoras’s famous reply that he is not wise and he is not a god but a lover of wisdom (for only the gods are wise).¹⁴ The gods do not fear death because they are not mortal and they possess wisdom because they are not affected by mortal limits. The gods do not have need of philosophy or ethics because the question of the best life is relevant only to a mortal life.

To ask what is best to do or what life is best to live is relevant only to a being who cannot live all possible lives but who must choose one rather than another, as Plato portrays in the scene of souls choosing lives in the Myth of Er.¹⁵ There cannot be an ethics of immortals. The philosopher, not being immortal, imitates the immortal. This necessitates that his making in words—his philosophizing—confronts the ultimate condition of human existence: fear of death. By ordinary people this is confronted by religion (by the poets’ tales). Socrates, on the last day of his life, confronts the fear of death in his speech and action. He speaks and acts as no human would—more like a god. Ann Hartle suggests that the description of Socrates’ control of himself in taking the poison stretches credibility to the limit; it is very difficult to believe that anyone could control himself to the extent Socrates is said to have done.¹⁶ In accordance with the above reasons, Socrates is portrayed as hardly mortal.

The True as Made

How does this give us a philosophical pragmatics? And what are its implications for human ethics? To answer this I wish to connect the interpretation I have given of the poet and philosopher as makers in Platonic thought with the Vichian conception of making. In *The Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, Vico formulates the principle that “the true is the made” (*verum ipsum factum est*) or “the true is convertible with the made” (*verum et factum conventuntur*),¹⁷ and this principle carries over into his conception of poetic wisdom (*sapienza poetica*) in the *New Science*.¹⁸ If we apply Vico’s conception that “the true is the same as [convertible with] the made” to the ancient notion of the maker, some light can be thrown on the question. My aim is not the interpretation of Vico, which I have done elsewhere, but to use his principle to my own ends, in the spirit of his thought.¹⁹

The *poeta* makes a “poetic wisdom.” In Vico’s view this is a legitimate form of wisdom, a genuine *sapienza* that is the first or primordial operation of the human mind. Vico, like modern myth theorists such as Lévi-Strauss, understands mythmaking and myths as the first form of human thinking, from which the forms of the human civil world develop. Human beings first make what is true in their world in mythico-poetic form. *True* in this context should be understood as *intelligible*. The first form of human intelligibility is to be found in the myth. Human beings are first poets before they are philosophers. Yet philosophy is born through the transformation of mythical structures into intellectual structures, as, for example, Bruno Snell shows in *The Discovery of the Mind*, and which is also shown in the work of the British classicist F. M. Cornford.²⁰ Vico’s view would agree with such research.

The poetically true, like the mathematically true, is true because it is made. The philosophically true is true for the same reason. The intelligibility of the world produced by the philosopher is possible because of the original intelligibility of the world produced by the poet. The philosopher is a *poeta*, a maker, but he does not compose poems. The philosopher, like the mythmaker, presumes that “the True is the whole,” to use Hegel’s sentence.²¹ The philosopher makes the true or the intelligible through the power of the word; his making, like that of the poet, is linguistic, but linguistic here includes the actions of the philosopher. Thus in the *Phaedo* we have a portrait of the actions of Socrates the philosopher as well as a report of his words. In the ancient world the philosopher is a version of the wise man whose thought is connected with his action, unlike the modern philosopher, who is all thought.

The signs that the philosopher uses to communicate with his readers or hearers are never merely images containing their own truth. The philosopher’s speech is always about a specific problem or subject matter, but its aim and ef-

fect on the audience is always other than what it seems. The aim of philosophical speech is always to obtain a glimpse of the soul. Thus the philosopher is always “practicing to die,” that is, to get a glimpse from within the body of what is not the body. Only because philosophers are mortal is philosophy necessary; the philosophical sign is always pointing to what is not present in it. It is often said that Socrates never claims to be wise, but he does claim this once, in the *Apology*, where he says that he is wise in the limited sense of having human wisdom.²² Human wisdom is to know that true philosophizing is always informed by a tension—that the philosopher is mortal and that the wisdom of the god is always just out of reach.

The true philosopher’s aim is to have the signs he uses make this one truth and affect his hearers with that one sense of themselves that Plato, as I mentioned above, states in the telling of the Myth of Er in the *Republic*: “the responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice, the god has none.”²³ Only philosophy can guide us because it takes seriously that the necessity for choice comes from the fact that humans are mortal. The genuine grasp of the truth that we are mortal makes us lovers of wisdom—of what the immortal gods possess—rather than lovers of the body—what will desert us at the moment of death. The poetically true is of the sensible and bodily. Anyone who cannot grasp poetry in this way cannot experience its merits. But poetry cannot confront the fear of death. The poetic sign can form this emotion only as an image. The poetic is always on the level of what *is*; like perceptions, all poems are true. The philosophical sign is always attempting to direct attention to what *is not*, to grasp what is absent and what in principle is absent.

As fear motivates Vico’s first humans to form the thunder and lightning as the god, and thus make the first mythical or poetic wisdom, so fear motivates a true philosophizing. The philosopher is always attempting to see what is not there. The philosophical concern with the negativity of things, with what is not there, is a continual practice for confronting death, the ultimate negative of his existence. Fear of death has its basis in fear of the world. Worldly fear is based in the realization that things are not what they seem to be—the beginning point of philosophy. The philosopher asks: Are the gods spoken about in the myths real? The mythmaker never asks this.

Modern Ethics

How do the philosopher’s pragmatics affect ethics? Or how might they do so? The task of philosophers, on the account I have been exploring here, is to convert others to philosophy through their speeches—to make them consider the question of the best life and the pursuit of virtue. The defect of all modern ethics

is that it does not teach us how to die, and in that respect it does not really teach us how to live. Modern ethical systems and principles may teach us how to act, and are useful in this regard, but they do little for us in the art of life or the art of practicing to die. Ethical thinkers from Kant to John Rawls must either exclude death from their ethics, or, in some fashion, advance a version of religion (for example, Kant) to cope with the question of mortality as such. Religious imagery is where the nature of human mortality is formed, if we do not look back to the ancient tradition of philosophy. Since modern ethics does not consider the fear of death, it cannot offer us much regarding the art of life.

Here I have in mind the objection that the concentration on Socrates' claim that "those who philosophize rightly are practicing to die" makes philosophy a morbid and single-minded activity and that philosophy should also be about life. Montaigne, in his essay "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," considers the problematic nature of this claim.²⁴ Although he opens this essay by connecting the claim with Cicero ("Ciceron dit que Philosopher ce n'est autre chose que s'apresté à la mort"), he also refers to Socrates. What concerns Montaigne is whether all philosophical effort should be directed toward achieving the right death, and his criticism of Socrates in broadest terms is that philosophy must be connected with life, not simply with death.

If Socrates' claim concerning right philosophizing and death is taken in the sense I have interpreted it, not just in the narrow sense of learning how to confront the particular moment of one's own death (although the importance of this should not be underplayed), then an art of life is also involved. Philosophy is undertaken to learn to live as well as to learn to die. The art of life organized around the understanding and pursuit of virtue is present as a common vision in the Platonic texts and Aristotle's *Ethics*, despite their classic differences.

The art of life is not a topic in modern ethics because modern ethics does not presuppose that one must become a philosopher to live fully, that is, to choose the best life. Such an arrogant and undemocratic claim is unthinkable for the modern ethicist. Since the modern man lives in a world that exists "after virtue," to use Alasdair MacIntyre's words, modern man always tends toward the life of a functionary—the actor in search of the right principles to guide his actions and judgments.²⁵ Pursuit of the Good and the virtuous life are out of the question; the most that can be expected in modern ethics is something clear and operational. The notion of the art of life as it existed in the ancient world or as it was rediscovered in the Renaissance seems hardly imaginable.

Contemporary ethics follows the technological mind and takes up specific issues for debate. The art of life, and its connections with practicing to know how to die, cannot be approached from this mentality. Jean-Jacques Rousseau says in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* that if Socrates were alive today he would not be put to death but simply subjected to ridicule.²⁶ Contemporary

ethics could have little else as a response than this to the Socratic claims here under discussion. I think there is no way to incorporate the Socratic perspective into the perspectives of modern ethical thought because ultimately, for all they may teach, modern ethical viewpoints do not teach us how to live or die.

Conclusion

What I have attempted in these remarks is to recover some of the meaning of Socrates' claim concerning the relation of true philosophizing to human death. My aim has been, not a historical interpretation of this claim, but an assessment of what significance it may have for a conception of philosophical communication and how it places philosophy at the center of human existence. My account leaves much unsaid. My aim has been more to present Socrates' claim in panoramic fashion than to give a definitive argument. My wish is that Socrates' claim might at least be recalled and taken seriously once again.

CHAPTER 3

Putting Philosophical Questions (in)to Language

Philosophical Language

The relation of philosophy to language is a topic too large to be covered in a short space because the nature of philosophy and the nature of language are among the largest subjects possible to discuss in humanistic thought. I wish not to treat this topic generally, but to speak against a view that philosophy is essentially discursive and that any other elements of expression involved in its production are accidental to its purpose. I wish to advocate: that within the truth that the philosopher seeks to produce lies (or should lie) the truth of the poet. My aim is not simply a descriptive claim about what philosophy is; my aim is also a prescription. I hold, with Collingwood, that “the question what philosophy is, cannot be separated from the question of what philosophy ought to be.”¹

Philosophy both is and ought to be a literary art. What the philosopher produces is thought put into words. How can the philosopher and how ought the philosopher put thought into words? To answer this I wish to call attention to two models: to the Socratic and to the Hegelian, specifically the Hegel of the preface and full text of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Socrates defines the task of philosophical speech as self-knowledge. Hegel’s “Science of the Experience of Consciousness,” as he calls the *Phenomenology*, has been rightly termed a *Bildungsroman*. It is the longest and fullest speech yet given on the self-education of humanity.

The famous medium of Socratic philosophical speech is the question, at least as it comes to us through Plato. Socrates may rightly be said to be the inventor of the question in philosophy. In the speech of the Platonic-Socrates, *Being*, the topic of pre-Socratic philosophers, becomes a question. Prior to the Socratic mentality, Being is that about which declarations can be made. In the

speech of Socrates it becomes the subject of questions. Once this change in the form of speech and thought is enacted, Being becomes not a physical substance but an *eidos*. The original meaning of *eidos*, current in Homer, is “what one sees,” the appearance or shape of a body. This meaning of *eidos*, which underwent transformations among the pre-Socratic thinkers, is played upon by Socratic-Platonic speech and connected with Being. Once philosophizing takes the form of questioning, Being ceases to be something merely there and becomes a *problem*. It becomes a problem for the self in its quest for a knowledge distinctive to itself. The philosopher of self-knowledge aims, through questions, to attain a grasp of the true shape of what is real and to discover the proper place of the philosopher’s humanity within it. The attainment of this would turn the love of wisdom into wisdom itself, and the speech of the question into the completely wise speech of the whole.

To transform the love of wisdom into wisdom itself is exactly what Hegel claims he can accomplish in the *Phenomenology*.² There is no doubt but that Hegel intends his book, or at least his philosophy as grasped in its totality, to be a book of wisdom.³ In the *Phenomenology* Hegel speaks for consciousness, or, as he sets up the narrative, consciousness speaks to and for itself through Hegel. In the final paragraph of the *Phenomenology* Hegel informs the reader, in a striking way, of a deeply Socratic-Platonic point that has been guiding the thought of the work throughout: that all that has been said by and about consciousness is the product of *Erinnerung*, recollection—Memory—which Hegel, in a lecture fragment written about the same time, calls the “absolute Muse” (Mnemosyne).⁴

Hegel’s famous dialectic has behind it the ordinary human process of posing a question, the answer to which leads to a further question, of the type that leads thought to a more total perspective on the subject at hand. This distinctively human process, originally forged as a philosophical process in ancient Socratic thought and speech, is organized by Hegel in service of the complete speech of the whole. Hegel may rightly be called the discoverer of the whole. In discovering this, however, like Socrates in his invention of the question as the prime philosophical instrument, Hegel has only brought to the fore what was inherent in the philosophical enterprise itself. Hegel simply designates and attempts to carry out in his actual text what is already there and which no one has so directly attempted before.

The only other figure I would associate with this is Vico. There is no question but that Vico, in his *New Science*, intended to make and did make as complete a philosophical speech as the human imagination can allow. Vico’s speech is very different from Hegel’s speech, in many ways. Hegel believes his speech to be based on the *Begriff* (concrete concept) and its transformations within consciousness. In one of its essential aspects, he claims that the *Phenomenology* is a *begriffene Geschichte* of the experience of consciousness.⁵ Vico believes his speech

in the *New Science* to be based in and to draw from the power of *fantasia* (imagination) and that the institutions and thoughts of humanity are guided and originally formed by a logic of *fantasia* or *universali fantastici* (imaginative universals).⁶ Vico saw himself in the light of Socrates and the Socratic sense of philosophical speech. He concludes his autobiography with the report that he always attempted to teach the young by being himself an example of “wisdom speaking” (*la sapienza che parla*), and he compares himself to the lines of the *Fabulae* of Phaedrus regarding Socrates: “I would not shun his death to win his fame; / I’d yield to odium, if absolved when dust.”⁷

I take poets here not in the modern sense, but in the ancient sense of those who speak about the gods, those whose language reveals the divine within the natural order of things. With Vico I wish to say that the first humans, the founders of humanity, the “children of the human race” were “theological poets,” as Vico called them. Religion, in Vico’s view, is the first principle of humanity.⁸ Philosophy ultimately arises in human affairs as a transformation of the original poetic-religious speech about the gods from which human society is founded. I intend this view of the closeness of poetic and religious speech to be kept in mind in the remarks that follow.

Eloquence

How does philosophy put itself into language? I have suggested two fundamental ways: through the question and through the attempt to recreate the whole of things in language, in a total speech, to say all that can be said. In regard to this second way, the philosopher does not claim to say all that literally can be said, but neither does the philosopher aim simply at a speech that is complete in its general principles of thought. The speech of the whole must itself be a whole; that is, it must speak of the small and large, the near and far, the particular and general, the familiar and unfamiliar, the ordinary and extraordinary, and so forth. Of such a procedure we should be able to say what Vico reminds us was said of Demosthenes, who came forth from the Platonic Academy “armed with his invincible enthymeme, which he formed by means of a very well regulated excess, going outside his case into quite distant things with which he tempered the lightning flashes of his arguments, which, when striking, amazed the listeners so much the more by how much he had diverted them.”⁹

Hegel’s speech in which the true as the whole is revealed in language is just the ancient idea of eloquence. In *The Spirit and Its Letter: Traces of Rhetoric in Hegel’s Philosophy of “Bildung,”* John H. Smith has shown that not only was Hegel, from his earliest education, fully schooled in the principles of classical rhetoric, but also that his representation of *Bildung* (human education) in the

Phenomenology—and the *Phenomenology* itself—is constructed very consciously on classical rhetorical principles.¹⁰ Smith's work must come as a distinct surprise to those traditional Hegelians who, since their university days, have been led to read and to regard Hegel as the philosopher of the pure concept and the pure category par excellence, and who have continued to interpret the text with such a view, never believing for a moment that there was any rhetoric in it. In Vico's work it is not so surprising to find both poetic and rhetorical elements (although some of his commentators have certainly missed them), because throughout his professional life at the University of Naples Vico held the position of Royal Professor of Latin Eloquence, and he both taught and practiced rhetorical composition throughout his lifetime.

In a time when rhetoric is lacking from most modern education and thought we must remember that eloquence refers to the completeness of a speech, not the fineness of the phraseology or what can be termed the elegance or ornament in the speech. To be a good speaker, to speak with eloquence, the speaker must say all there is to say, appropriately, about a subject, to take the audience through all the aspects that can be drawn out of the subject matter. To draw all of this forth, in language that offers both the details of the subject and its generalities, is to speak with eloquence. Such a speech will naturally bear the mark of wisdom. *Eloquentia* and *sapientia* go hand in hand: wisdom speaking. Cicero holds that invention (*inventio*) and arrangement (*dispositio*), the amassing of materials and their coherent arrangement, are in the range of anyone, but that eloquence is another matter.¹¹ I take Cicero's point to be that anyone can in fact think, either because of the presence of natural powers of intelligence and talent for subject matter, or because of these powers coupled with proper training. But the formulation of thought in language is a matter of special importance and does not follow unproblematically from the power of natural or trained thought. This does not deny that the ancients allowed for the possibility of natural eloquence in a speaker, for they did.

Quintilian says that Cicero thought eloquence of special importance and put his main effort into its instruction. Quintilian says: "That he was right in so doing this is perfectly obvious just from the name of the thing we are talking about. The word *eloqui* means to bring out and communicate to an audience the thoughts you have formed in your mind."¹² The partial mind, in philosophy, makes the partial speech, ineloquent and ultimately useless, no matter how high-sounding and how nicely such partial speech may turn phrases and even please with ornament and elegance. To have done the research, which is what the stages of *inventio* and *dispositio* mean in modern terms, and then to be unable to recreate the total, in language, of what is in the mind, to use Quintilian's words, "is useless, like a sword that is put up and will not come out of its scabbard."¹³

Philosophy cannot avoid rhetoric, but it also cannot avoid poetry. It cannot avoid poetry because it cannot avoid tropes. One way to put this is: for philosophy to engage in the eloquent speech of the whole, and thus to aim at the production of the true in language, to make the true appear to the philosopher and the audience in words, requires topics (*topoi*), those *loci* or general commonplaces upon which the philosopher must depend in order to make a speech. *Topoi* have been called by Vico, following the tradition of rhetoric, “the art of finding ‘the *medium*,’ i.e., the middle term,”¹⁴ thinking, for example, of Aristotle’s description in the *Prior Analytics* of how from the grasp of a middle term the other terms of the syllogism can be constructed from an enthymeme and an argument correctly formed.¹⁵ Topics is a vast subject, about which both the ancients and the moderns have written, but, however topics as a subject is to be understood, it is clear that philosophers, like anyone else who wishes to speak fully and understandably on a subject, must draw forth what is said from some basic mental places. In some way these must command some common intelligibility, in a fashion analogous to the need for the middle term, as that which must be found in order to make a desired connection between the other two terms of a syllogism.

In addition to *topoi* are *tropoi*, tropes. Vico, following Gerardus Vossius, advances a fourfold arrangement of tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony.¹⁶ I wish here to focus attention on only the first and fourth—on metaphor, that Vico identifies with myth and the form of the original thought of humanity—and on irony, which Vico claims arrives in human experience only with the presence of philosophers in the life of any culture or nation. Irony is unknown in primitive or truly mythical thought.

I said earlier that within philosophical truth there is and must be poetic truth. This takes us back to the famous quarrel with the poets in the tenth book of the *Republic*. This quarrel is complex—indeed, it is in some ways *the* fundamental problem of ancient philosophy, at least of Platonic philosophy. I wish to focus here on only one of its aspects: that moment of it that centers around the double meaning of *poiein*. Plato plays upon the fact that *poiein* means both *to make* generally and *to compose poetry*. *Poiētēs* means both poet and maker, a meaning preserved in the Latin *poeta*. One way to understand the quarrel concerning the relation of art to truth is that the poet and the philosopher are both makers of truth, or purport to be regarded as having this goal. Unlike craftsmen or gods, they both make whatever they make with words; their task is putting into language what they have thought, the material that they have invented and arranged. They are both what we may call *makers of the word*. That is, they make speeches, at the basis of which, whether explicit or implicit, are those metaphors and themes already present in mythology. The

poets (and the rhapsodes) recreate and retell in their metaphors and songs these original themes and the original wisdom of myths.

Philosophical Metaphors

The speech of the philosophers is not free of metaphor and myth. We need only recall that Plato's apparent attack on poetry in the tenth book of the *Republic* concludes in his telling the Myth of Er, one of the most important in the Platonic corpus. Metaphors as well as myths (the Socratic-Platonic "likely stories") are employed throughout the dialogues, as they are throughout ancient philosophy generally. The metaphor is everywhere in ancient philosophy and, I wish to suggest, in later philosophy. As Vico says, "every metaphor is a fable in brief."¹⁷ Philosophy itself originates in the attempt to overcome the myth as the key to the nature of things, and yet the myth, the story, the metaphor, is always with philosophy. The language of the myth is always there, like an unwelcome relative, in philosophy's house of logic, with philosophy unable to accomplish the eviction process.

We keep philosophy in mind through its metaphors—through Heraclitus's river, Plato's cave, Aristotle's sea battle, Augustine's pear tree, Anselm's fool, Occam's razor, Machiavelli's prince, Bacon's idols, Descartes' *poêle*, Spinoza's bondage, Leibniz's windowless monads, Pascal's wager, Locke's candle, Berkeley's tar water, Hume's fork, Kant's fog banks of illusion, Mill's canons, Hegel's master-servant, Marx's fetish, Smith's hidden hand, Russell's logical atom, Wittgenstein's family resemblance, Husserl's bracketing, Heidegger's *Holzweg*, Quine's bound variable—there is no end to the lists for the history of philosophy, or for individual philosophies, that could be constructed. Indeed, the history of philosophy, in terms of the images and master images employed by major philosophers, has yet to be written.

It is written in our heads, because it is through the images and in terms of them that we do in fact recall and have access to philosophies and to the whole history of philosophy.¹⁸ Even some of the most rationally and analytically dedicated philosophical positions depend upon and employ metaphors as the keys to their thought or method, such as the phrase often employed by analytic philosophers of ordinary language, in their discussions of a generation ago, who would attack a sentence by first asking, of the sentence: "Which term wears the trousers?"—an odd, Freudian metaphor.

Surely enough has been said to suggest that metaphors and images, the elements of poetic and mythological thinking, are present in philosophy. But are such images accidental to its nature, to its use of language, or are they a necessary component of philosophical truth and its statement? My answer is yes, the

metaphor or image is not only typical of philosophical expression, it should also be a part of it. There is no question today but that the myths, the characters, who they are, their very names, in some cases, and the analogies and particular metaphors used by the various speakers of the Platonic dialogues and by Socrates are crucial to proper reading, interpretation, and the general understanding of the dialogues. Too much intelligent attention has been given to reading the Platonic texts for anyone today truly to think, as was thought a generation ago, that the dialogues are essentially a great catalogue of philosophical arguments, to be analyzed in papers before the American Philosophical Association and other philosophical bodies.

But what of Hegel? Hegel has traditionally been thought of as a master of the philosophy of the idea, his logic called a march of "bloodless categories," each one begun with a capital letter in English-language discussions. Hegel was thought of as the great advocate of reason, "the real is the rational, the rational the real," and although he advocates the concept as concrete concept or concrete universal, it is a form of reason, not imagination. In my *Hegel's Recollection* I have tried to present in detail the images of Hegel's *Phenomenology* as the master keys to the work (and I have suggested that the *Science of Logic* is not so free of this procedure as might appear on first glance).¹⁹

But in this regard let Hegel speak for himself. In his forecast of the need for a proper philosophy, in the fragment of the "Earliest System-program of German Idealism" (1796 or 1797), Hegel says: "The philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet. Men without aesthetic sense are our literal-minded philosophers [*unsere Buchstabenphilosophen*]. The philosophy of spirit is an aesthetic philosophy." He goes on to call poetry the "teacher of humanity" (*Lehrerin der Menschheit*) and says that poetry will survive all other arts and sciences. He says that he will advance an idea that he regards as entirely new, one that has not occurred to anyone else: "We must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be in the service of ideas, it must be a mythology of *Reason*."²⁰ This is Hegel's proposal for how to take up the ancient quarrel of philosophy with the poets.

To what extent Hegel may be said to have carried out this program or at least stuck to its ideal is a matter beyond this essay. I suspect that this theme runs deeper into his work than any of the traditional interpretations has realized, and an attempt to read Hegel with this in mind as an ideal might discover a Hegel that no one has bothered really to know.

Vico's solution to the ancient quarrel with the poets is very close to Hegel's projected mythology of reason. The longest book of the *New Science* (Book 2) is addressed to Vico's conception of poetic wisdom (*sapienza poetica*). Vico solves the problem by making poetry the earliest form of wisdom, from which philosophy itself ultimately arises. Philosophy will maintain a heroic stance of

mind not divorced from the poetic imagination until it finally allows itself to fall into the barbarism of reflection and speech, typical of the last days of any nation's life.

When philosophy reaches this final state, we might say, with Hegel: "when philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old"—and the philosopher becomes the keeper and even the hunter of the dusk.²¹ But as Hegel says above, and as Vico holds in his conception of historical *corsi* and *ricorsi*, poetry is what survives all the arts and sciences, to be what is needed to make a new beginning. The thought of anything new is always poetic, whether it be the birth of a nation or the birth of a new thought in the metaphor that makes a new connection between the elements of experience. Aristotle says: "But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars."²² This, we may say, is as true for the philosopher as it is for the poet.

The Difference between Philosophy and Poetry

How, then, in terms of what has been said, can philosophy be differentiated from poetry? In discussions of the poetic nature of philosophic thought this is always the final question; it never fails to be asked. It is as if the philosopher, having believed from the first study of philosophy forward that philosophy was a project of reason and argument, of concept-formation and discursive truth, now sees philosophy disappearing into the well of poetry, the concept passing out of existence into the image, the argument being laid out for burial, to be interred within the soil of the story, the narrative, and the fable. The forms of reason are just transparencies of thought, about to disappear into the richness of the speech of the poet. Would it not be better to maintain the *mauvaise foi* of the myth of rationality of philosophy, shameful as it may be, rather than to risk the loss of philosophy itself into the language of the image and the passions? Has such acknowledgment of the poetic element in reason come too far to return to assert the traditional conceptual, logical purposes of philosophical thought?

What prevents philosophy from becoming poetry, in the view I wish to suggest, is not the fact that philosophy can take discursive form. Other forms of thought can occur in discursive language—science, for example. What keeps philosophy from becoming a story or a series of metaphorical understandings is the presence of the question. It is no accident that philosophy, at least in the sense of self-knowledge, originates in the ancient Socratic discovery of the question. It is the question that takes us beyond the image, and the continual presence of the question keeps philosophical thought from receding into the poem,

into the images upon which it depends for its formulation and communication. The image or metaphor, the story or fable, always *presents*. As Susanne Langer states: "Metaphor is our most striking evidence of *abstractive seeing*, of the power of human minds to use presentational symbols. Every new experience, or new idea about things, evokes first of all some metaphorical expression."²³

Metaphors provide thought with the immediate sense of reality and the new connection that provides for beginnings. The image is always a moment of *archpoē*. True beginning points in speech require the connection of the metaphor. The question, however, establishes motion. It is inherently dialectical. It does not hold things together so much as it pushes them apart and throws them into opposition.

With the question always comes the possibility of the trope of irony, the fourth trope which Vico, as mentioned above, associates especially with philosophy. Irony, like metaphor, involves the similarity of dissimilars, but in metaphorical formulation the connection is simply present. Irony presents the audience with what is not rather than with what is. The recipient of the ironic statement is to take what is said not in terms of what is said but in terms of the opposite of what is said. Things are other than what they seem. Vico says of irony that "it is fashioned of falsehood by dint of a reflection which wears the mask of truth."²⁴

The fable or the metaphor is, like the myth, always a "true narration." Vico holds that because an image is like a perception it is necessarily true. It has no internal opposition. It asks no question. Irony, however, asks the question of truth. The ironic statement must be penetrated in order that it state a truth. It contains what Hegel calls the "labor of the negative" (*Arbeit des Negativen*). If Hegel's dialectic, at least as it is in the *Phenomenology*, is viewed as a process of questions and answers that consciousness gives to itself, then the trope of irony is a key. For consciousness must come to regard any stage of truth that it achieves as a mask, as something "fashioned of falsehood by dint of a reflection."

To penetrate the irony of its position, consciousness must form its state as a question and then be led beyond it, to a meaning implied ironically in its original state of being. In this way every appearance leads to reality. The speech of the whole, the speech in which everything is to be told, must necessarily be a speech that encompasses oppositions. The speech of the whole is governed by the principle of *coincidentia oppositorum*. It must pass through all opposites, great and small, near and far, particular and universal, and so forth. Like the phenomenology of consciousness, it will be a series of ironic revelations, with each new beginning marked by the trope of metaphor and with each stage, each form of truth, held together by an overriding metaphor.

Until now, I have not taken any care to distinguish between the written and the spoken word in this consideration of philosophical language. In terms of the view I have developed, I suggest that proper philosophical speech is governed,

not only by the sense of the whole, the question, and the tropes of irony and metaphor, but it is, when written, also an attempt to *speak in terms of writing*. The written word is static but the form of the question is dynamic; it contains the internal motion that Hegel attributes to the activity of speculation, of the speculative sentence. One might put it this way: philosophical writing is always a mask, because its aim is to get its reader to the level of speaking, to making, in his or her words, the truth of the speech that is locked on the page. In this sense the written word points to the spoken word distinctive of philosophy's own Socratic origins.

Philosophy as a Memory Theater

Finally, my title implies that philosophical questions are not only put *in* language: they are also put *to* language. I have called the philosopher the maker of the word, in the sense that the philosopher makes philosophy through a linguistic art. But the philosopher does not make language. Language always stands before the philosopher as a memory theater. It is a theater because it provides the theater of thought itself, that scene in which the actions of philosophical thought can take place. It is a memory theater because each word carries with it the memory of the human race. It contains a history of its own meaning. Philosophical speech, like humanist speech generally, must achieve what it wishes to convey by playing on the totality of the word. Philosophy, on the view here suggested, is made in the theater of language to which the philosopher comes and sets in motion through questions and metaphorical connections.

To say this is to take a stand against the notion that philosophical language is ever rightly technical. As Collingwood puts it: "The greatest philosophers, especially those who by common consent have written well in addition to thinking well, have used nothing that can be called a technical vocabulary."²⁵ It is the language of the agora, to endorse another Socratic principle of speaking. Philosophy itself becomes a mask because as Socrates uses the ordinary words of speech he can barely be understood; what is being said is at any moment possibly ironic and beyond our grasp. The philosopher is always in the position of putting questions to language because language seemingly has all the answers. The ways words are used or can allow themselves to be used seem to contain all that the philosopher desires to know. As the possessor of language the philosopher is the immediate possessor of the collective experience of humanity that backs up the words and is carried in their histories. In language there seem to lie all the answers to the philosopher's questions, yet language itself rests upon a distinction between *res* and *verba*. Language is not all there is and language is not simply about itself.

Conclusion

I think we are left to say, with Plato, “For this reason anyone who is seriously studying high matters will be the last to write about them and thus expose his thought to the envy and criticism of men. What I have said comes, in short, to this: whenever we see a book, whether the laws of a legislator or a composition on any other subject, we can be sure that if the author is really serious, this book does not contain his best thoughts; they are stored away with the fairest of his possessions. And if he has committed these serious thoughts to writing, it is because men, not the gods, ‘have taken his wits away.’”²⁶

I end, then, with the view that true philosophy is never written down. To think with the gods, the ancient occupation of serious philosophy, is to respect language as the power distinctive to human thought but not to trust it to embody wisdom fully. Language approaches wisdom when speech is eloquent, when the whole of the subject of the philosopher is spoken about and the subject, in this case, is not something specific but all that there is. Philosophy itself, for the serious, never fully enters language and is certainly never to be identified with the analysis of language.

CHAPTER 4

Absolute Knowledge and Philosophical Language

The Limits of Reflection

My aim is to suggest a conception of speculative philosophy by first considering the view that philosophy is based in reflection and then to show how reflection leads necessarily to speculation. I intend to explore two questions: What is the standpoint of mind from which philosophies are created? What is the manner of language through which philosophies communicate? My account will revolve around two statements that occur in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.

Hegel states: "Whatever happens, every individual is a child of his time; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts. It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age, jump over Rhodes. If his theory really goes beyond the world as it is and builds an ideal one as it ought to be, that world exists indeed, but only in his opinions, an unsubstantial element where anything you please may, in fancy, be built." And he states: "When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's grey in grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk."¹

These statements mark a turning point in the history of philosophy or at least in the history of speculative philosophy and metaphysics. They state how it is possible to conduct the enterprise of metaphysics after Kant's criticism of it. Kant claims to have shown that it is not possible to have a knowledge of things outside of experience. It is not possible to have a metaphysics in which reason transcends experience entirely and rises to a knowledge of substantial forms that lie outside of time. Metaphysics, Kant claims, must be an activity in which reason reflects upon its own work within experience. If reason attempts to discover

unity in experience by going beyond experience to a transcendent principle it ends in paralogsms, antinomies, and the difficulties of the ontological argument. If reason remains within experience and reflects on the ways in which it brings concepts together with intuitions it can systematize experience from within. By relating the various ways in which concepts and intuitions are schematized it can develop an account of experience without an appeal to the transcendent and articulate the unity of its own action.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, if viewed as a work of reflection, can appear as the fulfillment of these requirements. It shows how it is possible to construct a system of experience from within it. Each stage of Hegel's *Phenomenology* can be viewed as joining a conceptual and intuitive element. Each stage has connections with the others. As Hegel says, his system is a circle. The final stage of absolute knowledge, on this interpretation, appears as a stage in which reason faces itself as the activity that constructs a phenomenology of its own actions. Absolute knowledge is the realization by consciousness that the subject matter of each of its previous forms has been itself. If we act out the circularity of this system, the state of absolute knowledge sends us back to the beginning of the *Phenomenology* to view the ways in which consciousness has encountered itself. It brings us back, however, in a new way. In following the stages through which reason brings together the conceptual and intuitive elements we are not just aware of the course reason takes, we are aware that it is a course of reason. We have acquired not simply the standpoint of a reader but also the standpoint of the author, the standpoint required to have written the *Phenomenology*. We are not simply the pilgrim making progress, we are also the director of the progress.

This approach to Hegel's system as a system of wholly internal relations and the way it meets Kant's criticism of metaphysics can be seen as articulated in Collingwood's theory of metaphysics as the science of "absolute presuppositions" in his *An Essay on Metaphysics*. Absolute presuppositions, for Collingwood, are not absolute in the sense that they are eternally true; they are absolute by virtue of the fact that they are the most general ideas upon which the thought of a given age depends. For Collingwood metaphysics is a historical science. He states: "Every metaphysical question either is simply the question what absolute presuppositions were made on a certain occasion, or is capable of being resolved into a number of such questions together with a further question or further questions arising out of these."² Metaphysics and, in turn, philosophy is the locating and describing of those principles that were in fact at work in thought at a given time. On this view, every philosopher is literally the child of his own time.

Philosophical knowledge comes upon the scene only when the work of the special sciences and fields of knowledge is finished. The philosopher is not the creator of new knowledge—he is the reflection of its creation. As the owl of Minerva, the philosopher silently observes the course of the sun throughout its day

and takes flight only at the falling of dusk. At dusk the philosopher leaves his perch to discover what the activity of the day has brought. Like the owl, the philosopher is essentially nocturnal. The philosopher is a night hunter.

Opposed to this conception of the philosopher and his knowledge is the view that the reflective act itself takes the philosopher outside of his own time. Reflection pursued to its limits is an act in which the philosopher transcends his own time. On this view the philosopher is regarded as the herald of the future. In this act of hunting down the presuppositions of the sciences the philosopher creates something new. The philosopher on this view adds nothing to knowledge as gathered by the sciences *per se*. But by his creation of a knowledge of knowledge, the philosopher has added a factor to knowledge. That which was implicit prior to the philosopher's attention is made explicit. The philosopher is at once a child of his own time and a herald of the future, for the future of knowledge is determined by what we know knowledge at present to be. Yet on this view the philosopher in an important sense remains a child of his time, for he exerts only a passive influence on the future. The philosopher must await the special sciences to take up his influence and incorporate it in the next new day.

Absolute knowledge has also had another meaning than the one expressed in Collingwood's theory of absolute presuppositions. Absolute knowledge has been taken at face value and is thought to contain the claim that Hegel's system is the final system of knowledge. Hegel is regarded as the ultimate dogmatist, a major example of where speculative metaphysics leads. Hegel's absolute is regarded as the ultimate abstraction, a monument to a mind gone wrong. On this view Hegel's concept of absolute knowledge is simply the concept of a transcendent metaphysics. It is regarded as a step backward in the history of philosophy, to the quest for knowledge of a transcendent principle of being from which all else can be deduced. Hegel's absolute is seen as an attempt to take a standpoint outside of human experience. Rather than a notion of the philosophic act as something occurring within and bound to the philosopher's own time, absolute knowledge is regarded as implying an act whereby the philosopher transcends his own time and in fact transcends time altogether. Absolute knowledge is regarded as an absolute reference point lying outside experience and from which all else may be known. This idea is thought preposterous and counted as the ultimate critical point against Hegelian metaphysics. Metaphysics on this view is regarded as being simply "news from nowhere."³

To this point two views of philosophical thought have been stated. One regards the philosopher as a child of his time, grasping knowledge from a unique viewpoint outside that of the particular sciences. The other regards the philosopher as engaged in the attempt to philosophize from nowhere, an intellectual escape artist seeking a place to stand outside experience, from which all else may be known. These views agree that philosophy or metaphysics as news from

nowhere is unacceptable. Each rejects this view for different reasons. They agree, however, that philosophy should not attempt to stand outside experience and that philosophy is to be a follower of the sciences or particular fields of knowledge. Each would attach different meanings to experience and to the way in which philosophy is to be a follower of the sciences, but they seem agreed that philosophical reflection should not be pursued as an attempt to go beyond experience.

For both, the philosopher is a being in time. Whether the philosopher is directed toward creating an account of the interrelationships between the sciences, as does Cassirer, or reasoning from them to a speculative cosmology, as does Whitehead, or dealing with problems on the basis of linguistic or psychological material, as do many philosophers in the analytic tradition, the results are conceived as more or less relative to the material on which they are a reflection. As the sciences change so our picture of knowledge and the world must change. As more is known about linguistics and the psychology of perception our approach to problems in philosophy of language and philosophical psychology will be affected.

The reflective act is viewed as something always performed relative to the conditions under which it occurs. It is as if reflective and analytic philosophers have all subscribed to an extremely narrow version of David Hume's statement in the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*: "Be a philosopher, but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man."⁴ As a philosopher I am a child of my time; I can through reflection hold up images to the sciences of their forms of knowledge, but as a philosopher I have no role in shaping the course of things. As a human being perhaps I can actively play such a role; as a philosopher my role is the passive assimilation of events. On the view that every philosopher is a child of his own time the philosopher is seen as expert in the art of creating conceptual mirrors.

The Double Perspective of Philosophical Systems

Implicit in the view that metaphysics is the bringing of news from nowhere is a further dimension, a dimension, I maintain, that is clearly there and which seriously challenges the theory of reflection implicit in the view that every philosopher is a child of his own time. Consider the following statements from Plato, Benedict de Spinoza, and George Berkeley.

PLATO:

Now imagine what would happen if he went down again to take his former seat in the Cave. Coming suddenly out of the sunlight, his

eyes would be filled with darkness. He might be required once more to deliver his opinion on those shadows, in competition with the prisoners who had never been released, while his eyesight was still dim and unsteady; and it might take some time to become used to the darkness.

They would laugh at him and say that he had gone up only to come back with his sight ruined; it was worth no one's while even to attempt the ascent. If they could lay hands on the man who was trying to set them free and lead them up, they would kill him. Yes, they would.⁵

SPINOZA:

Further reflection convinced me, that if I could really get to the root of the matter I should be leaving certain evils for a certain good. I thus perceived that I was in a state of great peril, and I compelled myself to seek with all my strength for a remedy, however uncertain it might be; as a sick man struggling with a deadly disease, when he sees that death will surely be upon him unless a remedy be found, is compelled to seek such a remedy with all his strength, inasmuch as his whole hope lies therein.⁶

BERKELEY:

We spend our lives in doubting of those things which other men evidently know, and believing those things which they laugh at and despise.⁷

In these statements the philosopher is portrayed not as a child of his own time apprehended in thoughts, but as a person apart. Once philosophers have been led through acts of reflection to raise ultimate questions, they find themselves to be totally set off from others. The philosopher speaks to them not from their own time but from beyond. Instead of contributing to the others' game of measuring shadows in the cave the philosopher speaks of the sun. The act of reflection has led the philosopher to speak about the sequence of shadows from a standpoint totally outside the sequence. The philosopher has allowed reason to lead to a position that may entail his or her own death. The peril is not necessarily from without but also from within, as the second and third quotations show.

Through reflection, through entertaining certain questions, the philosopher becomes a person sick with a deadly disease who must bend all efforts toward a

cure. The philosopher is led to a position where he or she can believe only what other people laugh at and despise. The philosopher is pictured as a person whose whole being has acquired a particular stance, not as a member of his or her own culture or place in history but outside, in an acquired position, looking on the scene as an outsider. There is no distinction between the philosopher as a philosopher and the philosopher as a person. The whole being of the philosopher has a single orientation toward the problem at hand. By successive acts of reflection, the philosopher has attained a position outside of culture, history, and time.

The philosopher speaks from beyond. That which is real for the philosopher is just what ordinary people laugh at and despise. The philosopher is not at home in the ordinary world. Philosophers become strangers to their own people and to themselves. Philosophical reflection becomes a dangerous business. It is dangerous because the philosopher lives in two worlds—within his or her own time, but also as the bringer of strange news. Perhaps all people feel something of this duality, but philosophers have made it the motif of their existence. They have in some way brought on themselves a strange disease for which they have no knowledge of the cure. Philosophical hermeneutics can offer no solution to this state of affairs because, unlike hermeneutics applied to the truths of sacred texts, philosophical hermeneutics can never hermeneutically establish what texts or institutions are worth being hermeneutical about.

The theory of philosophical reflection contained in the view of philosophers being children of their time is inadequate and must yield to and be supplemented by the view of philosophical reflection as the process whereby the philosopher is the creator of a news from nowhere and news from nowhere becomes the basis for the production of speculative philosophy. The difficulties of the theory of philosophers as children of their own time can be shown systematically. If we were to accept this view and its corresponding interpretation of absolute knowledge that is expressed in Collingwood's theory of philosophy as the science of absolute presuppositions, then we cannot explain why the works of philosophers of the past are as relevant today as they were in their own time. The view of philosophical reflection as the science of absolute presuppositions is not sufficient to account for the greatness of past philosophy. On this view, to read past philosophies would be for us simply to acquaint ourselves with our philosophical heritage—to review the presuppositions of past ages.

Great philosophers, however, do not speak to us as the expositors of past presuppositions. They remain a source of philosophy because they speak to us as immediately as does the philosophy of our own time, if not often more immediately. This relationship exists not because in some sense my own age involves in its presuppositions the absolute presuppositions of past ages, but because philosophy is never entirely in any age. The reason why past philosophies are ultimately meaningful to us is that we can share with them the act of mind out of

which philosophy itself is made. This act, the act of rational thinking, while it takes place in time does not have its ground in it. To put this in another way, the statement that all philosophers are children of their time, that they are their own time apprehended in thoughts, cannot itself spring from their own time. This statement itself must be made from a position outside of time.

The view of philosophical systems which I wish to suggest here, put in simplest terms, is that any philosophical system has two parts: the first part, in which the philosopher speaks as the child of his or her own time; and the second part, in which the philosopher speaks from an eternal perspective, that is, from nowhere. In reading a philosophy, that of Aristotle, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, or Whitehead, for example, the philosopher's thought in large part seems to go well. Each deals with the problems he sets for himself. There are difficulties in his thought but what he says is fundamentally enlightening. As the various arguments and views of the philosophy unfold, the philosopher is speaking to us from the perspective of a child of his or her own time. The views the philosopher formulates about this or that aspect of experience, about space, time, cause, substance, or self, have close connections with the state of thought of his or her own time. Also from this perspective the system of philosophy appears to build on itself. No fundamental breakdown of thought seems apparent. One part of the philosopher's account leads to another. It seems to us that if this sequence can be sustained we will arrive at a more or less adequate account of experience.

The difficult part comes in the last chapter, in Book 12 of the *Metaphysics* for Aristotle; in the monad of God for Leibniz; and in the fifth part of *Process and Reality* for Whitehead. This is the point at which the system turns upon itself and attempts to explain the principle through which all of its other explanations have been made. This is also the point at which the system suddenly becomes inadequate—God appears to be pure form, transcendent of the world, and we are left with two systems grading reality, a hierarchy of substances and an order of categories; or monads that have previously been seen to determine themselves causally through a principle of internal alteration are suddenly acted upon from the outside by a monad that is an eternal creator; we have been led to believe that all that exists are actual entities, but when we consider the multiplicity of actual entities as a whole we encounter an actual entity of a different order, for God does not provide data for the other actual entities in the same way they provide data for each other—God does not die.

It is at these points in a philosophy, the points at which the ultimate principle of experience is considered, that the second part of any philosophy comes forth. This is the point at which the creator of the system speaks to us not from the standpoint of his or her philosophy but from the standpoint of philosophy itself. The philosopher is no longer explaining things from within his or her first principles but is facing the problem of accomplishing an explanation of these

first principles through themselves. The maker of the system has, of course, been speaking indirectly from this perspective all along, but, when speaking of God or the absolute, the perspective itself makes its appearance.

On the view developed here, the accounts philosophers give of the ultimate reality, first principle, or God of their system can be regarded as portraits of the standpoint of mind from which philosophy itself is possible. What it is like to be the God of a philosophical system and what it is like to engage in the act of producing philosophical knowledge are the same. The fact that philosophical systems and their ultimate realities result in internal fragmentation in which they seem to transcend their own natures, or in a fragmentation of their relationship to the world, is itself a mirroring of the transcendence contained within the act of philosophical thought itself. The source of the difficulties of formulating a philosophical system of perfectly structured internal relationships is present in the act of thought wherein the system itself is created, and the transcendent element which produces the difficulties serves to give us a picture of the philosophical act, a picture which alters from philosophical system to philosophical system, as each comes to grips with that which is ultimate for it. The description of ultimate reality is itself an image of philosophical existence. It is a self-portrait of the philosopher who makes the system.

The Language of Suggestions

In answer to the first question that was originally posed, when the philosopher takes reflection to its limits—to the point where metaphysics becomes news from nowhere—he or she passes beyond the standpoint of reflection and passes on to the standpoint of speculation. The philosopher has come from a role within experience that is safe and secure as the custodian of all knowledge arranged in a system of the whole, to a paradoxical role of being both within and without experience. This paradoxical role generates vision and as the philosopher attempts to make sense of this vision the speculative sense of reason takes over, that allows the maker of the system to formulate a particular sense of the ultimate. The philosopher is now on an ascent to the absolute—to say in the final moments of the system what in principle cannot be said.

This perspective on philosophical systems contains, finally, implications for the status and style of philosophical language, which is the subject of the second question originally raised. Language is often thought of as having a descriptive and a prescriptive use, as either presenting a state of affairs or giving directions. Among other uses language has also a third use—that of being suggestive. Suggestions neither describe states of affairs nor prescribe courses of actions. Suggestions simply raise considerations; they are encouragements for us to think

about something in a way not previously thought. Suggestive language neither states something that is actually so nor commands us to do things in certain ways. Yet suggestions are not mere idle thoughts or nonsense statements; they express possibilities, plausible ways of looking at things that have not been previously seen. To make a suggestion is to attempt to have us regard something in a new light, to cause us to perceive something about a situation not previously seen. Descriptions refer to insights or perceptions already had and commonly known. Prescriptions refer to courses of action or thought readily conceivable and perhaps even previously known. Suggestions are neither of these; they do not have a definite reference. They are simply things to be considered; they are attempts to gain perspective, to gain insights, or to lead to intuitions not previously had.

Philosophical language, I think, is predominantly suggestive. It is in various moments descriptive and prescriptive, but this is not what distinguishes it. Philosophies are always attempts to alter our perspective on things. They are neither true or false nor correct or incorrect because they themselves purport to set the conditions for these. They are only more or less engaging. A philosophy gives us a new lease on things. But how are such suggestions made? Let us consider that there are three modes in terms of which anything can be said—through metaphor, through ordinary statement, and through technical statement or notation. By metaphor I mean that which is found in poetic statement, where language is used to call up a concrete image of a thing. By ordinary statement I mean language as we usually think of it—words employing their common meanings, structured according to an ordinary, often classificatory, manner of expression. By technical statement or notation I mean what occurs in the attempt to formulate a meaning in unambiguous words, symbols, or variables. Philosophical language employs all of these elements. They are the factors out of which philosophical suggestions are made. In fact the suggestive force of philosophical language can be viewed as stemming from the passing back and forth among these three modes.

My point is not that the basic statements of a philosophical system have the *prima facie* form of suggestions but that the type of thought created through philosophical language is analogous to that of a suggestion. This is particularly true when language is being used to present the principle of ultimate reality of the system. Here the philosopher assumes the trans-temporal perspective of presenting news from nowhere, of speaking directly from within the sphere of the speculative act that makes philosophy itself possible. The language used to accomplish this is not some particular language set off from other language but a language made up of those elements which comprise the possibilities of linguistic expression itself. Philosophical language used to convey such meanings tends to pass back and forth among the three modes mentioned above.

To take two examples: Aristotle, in Book 12 of the *Metaphysics*, faces the problem of describing the ultimate reality of the unmoved mover. He gives an account of celestial motion in terms of the astronomy of his day and argues that such motion implies an unmoved mover. Then he relates this sense of the divine to the act of thinking, speaking in fairly ordinary terms about an act in which all human beings engage and as we are familiar with it. Finally, he considers the ways in which the universe contains the good or the highest good and introduces the metaphor of an army. The good found in the army depends upon its order, but this order depends upon its leader, who does not depend upon it. Confronting the reader in these three ways, Aristotle wishes to show that everything in the world is interconnected and ordered together to one end.⁸ Whitehead, in the section of *Process and Reality* titled “Final Interpretation,” passes back and forth among these three modes of expression. Whitehead goes from statements about the history of theistic philosophy and the way in which God has been traditionally conceived to formulations in his own technical vocabulary, asserting that God has a “consequent,” “primordial,” and “superject” nature, to metaphorical statements such as God’s action is one of “tender loving care that nothing be lost” and “God is the great companion—the fellow sufferer who understands.”⁹

My point is not that this pattern of language can be found in all works of philosophical thought. It is only that, if philosophical language is viewed as primarily suggestive and as gaining suggestive power through the interplay of these three modes of linguistic expression, a model is provided from which to approach the language of philosophical systems, particularly those parts of them which express the ultimate principle of the system and portray the perspective of the speculative act.

Conclusion

When philosophers speak about the ultimate principle of their systems, they are speaking no longer from within their systems, but from without. It is at these ultimate points that their language is most purely interacting with itself and it is also at these points that their systems logically break down. It is here that their systems present us with a kind of news from nowhere, for they are all facing the same problem—that of speaking absolutely, of bringing reason together with itself. The act of reflection that is required for such language cannot occur within the philosopher’s own time or within the system the philosopher produces. It is possible only—and we can explain it only—if we regard the philosopher’s initial acts of reflection to have taken him or her not only outside his or her time but also, in a special sense, outside of time, to a point at which the speculative act of asserting absolute knowledge can be engaged.

When philosophers speak to us about the first principle of their systems they speak to us from beyond, and they speak to themselves from beyond, from an eternal perspective, a perspective, the ground of which is outside experience. Philosophical systems unavoidably espouse absolute knowledge, not just in the sense of describing absolute presuppositions but in the sense of knowing something eternally true.¹⁰ This eternal aspect is not derived as a particular conclusion. It is based in an actual standpoint of mind, and when philosophers present accounts of their first principles they transform their accounts into philosophical symbols of this standpoint.

CHAPTER 5

The Limits of Argument: Argument and Autobiography

Attachment to Argument

Attachment to argument is thought to be the characteristic that all schools of philosophy hold in common. From this perspective, the history of philosophy is a series of arguments, great and small, forever open to examination, and philosophy itself is this examination in addition to the production of new arguments. Seen in this way philosophy is an activity, the product of which is arguments. This is true, but it is a partial truth. All philosophers are trained in argument and are naturally attracted to it. But does love of argument define the philosophical nature? Does the tissue of argument that surrounds modern philosophy and the teaching of philosophy constitute philosophy?

None of our philosophers today need fear the danger, of which Socrates speaks in the *Phaedo*, of becoming misologic, a hater of argument.¹ *Unsere Buchstabenphilosophen*, “our literal-minded philosophers,” as Hegel calls them, suffer from neither *misologia* nor *melancholia*.² Their minds move easily, and in fact happily, from one argument to the next. With the creation of any argument there is always something more to do because the failure of any one argument is the condition for the generation of a next. There is a chain of arguments and criticisms that exists in relation to all manner of philosophical problems, ranging from those of applied ethics to those of cognitive science. Philosophy appears to be a sub-field of debate, moving between the poles of pro and con.

The modern philosopher’s stock in trade is argument. The modern philosophical mind functions as a great warehouse with an endless stock. Through the power of wit an argument can be drawn forth for any occasion. Then, through the philosopher’s powers of reflection and criticism, the argument can be called into question and answered by the production of a further argument

or an improved version of the original. This modern theater of argument has within it no misanthropes, such as Socrates feared—that, having trusted in people and having found none to be true friends, one might become misanthropic, and having trusted in argument and found all to fail in the truth, one might become misologic.

Instead we might put the modern philosopher of argument on the block, as in Lucian's *Philosophies for Sale*, and proclaim him or her to be a happy expert in this fluctuating of argument, counter-argument, and further argument.³ The potential buyer would need to be interested in something like what Hegel called a "bad infinity," in this case, the acquisition of a mental life that trades in just one thought after another.⁴ But *caveat emptor*, let the buyer beware. Every new argument seems a new lease on life, as every further step into the infinite seems an advance, yet carries the disappointing prospect that still another step will be possible. The yearning for the "knock-down argument" in philosophy is the yearning for an act of completion in a series inherently incapable of completion. Our literal-minded philosophers yearn for the world to be just as it is and for thought to show it to be so. In the meanwhile they are indefatigable, and busy with the next specific act of thought.

The attachment of philosophy to argument in modern thought stems from the detachment of philosophy from poetic and rhetoric. Philosophy suffers this separation at the hands of Descartes and Locke, both of whom saw truth as independent of the expressive powers of language. Modern philosophy is founded on the denial of the connection of metaphysics and poetry. The tension that exists between the making of the poetic image and the making of the metaphysical idea is resolved by the modern rationalist or empiricist founding of metaphysics on the device of supposition. Metaphysics is no longer understood as a transformation of the comprehension of the world through the images of the poet or mythmaker into the ideational forms of the metaphysician.

Metaphysics at the hands of the moderns is approached as the answer to doubt. Doubt as the beginning point of thought leads to the quest for certainty. Overcoming doubt requires adherence to method. Doubt is confronted by suppositional thinking, by hypothesis. The goal is the perfect hypothesis, the supposition that in its elaboration through the steps of a method reveals itself to be a certainty. Metaphysics, as an activity whose heart is supposition and method, is mimetic of science. When metaphysics becomes scientific in its form, two things fundamental to ancient philosophy are removed from it—eloquence and self-knowledge.

Modern metaphysics imitates the form of science but it is always different from science. Where science has experiments through which it attempts to make its truths, metaphysics has arguments wherein it attempts to settle issues through pure wit. Argument leads only to the infinite chain of arguments mentioned

above. The experiments of science imply the possibility of an applied wisdom; their results have implications for a way of acting in the world dependent upon what has been shown. Arguments never contain such possibilities for practice. But for the philosopher who is the literal-minded lover of arguments, their ability to influence action is exactly what is claimed. This explains the indefatigable philosophical concern with searching for "good reasons," "good arguments" for holding this or that belief or for doing this or that. Why is there so frequently this sort of emphasis on the value of arguments? It is claimed that arguments are what we need to understand anything or to know what to do. This is because arguments occupy the place in modern metaphysics, and also in ethics, that experiments occupy in modern science.

Practical knowledge depends upon how things are "seen"—the way in which our vision of things is directed. Experiments are so important and natural to practice because they direct our vision and thus are demonstrations. Arguments may give necessary intellectual form to a way that things are seen, but it is the vision that they presuppose, not the arguments themselves, that influences action and can produce important understandings. Arguments always depend upon something more than themselves. The truth that arguments seek is never in the arguments themselves; it is always elsewhere. It is with this elsewhere that the true philosopher is concerned.

The recovery of philosophy in an age of argument depends upon the re-establishing of the rapport between poetry and metaphysics, a truth that Vico teaches with his central doctrine of "poetic wisdom." Vico regarded the philosophical ideal and the ideal of philosophical education as "wisdom speaking." Modern metaphysics, with its ideals of supposition and method, abandons eloquence as important to truth.⁵ For the modern philosopher, eloquence refers to how something is said, independently of what is said. For the modern thinker, what is important is what is said; if it is said well, then so much the better, but the manner of speech is really unimportant. Once eloquence is given up, the modern ideal of truth can reign—truth as based on the method of right reasoning. Right reasoning need not concern itself with anything more than one subject at a time, one problem to be solved at a time. Vico says: "I hold the opinion that if eloquence does not regain the luster of the Latins and Greeks in our time, when our sciences have made progress equal to and perhaps even greater than theirs, it will be because the sciences are taught completely stripped of every badge of eloquence."⁶

Eloquence in the classical and ancient sense is not the ideal of how something is said, but the use of words to say all that can be said on a subject. To speak eloquently is to speak of a topic as a whole, to present its particulars and its generalities. Once eloquence is identified simply with elegant or adorned manner of speech, its connection with the ideal of speaking on the whole of a

subject is ignored and the modern conception of philosophical truth is established. When *eloquentia* is lost, *sapientia* and *prudentia*, the other two qualities with which it is classically associated, are also lost. The proper subject of philosophy is all that there is—virtue and the real. The love of wisdom is the love of the whole and eloquence is the ideal of putting that whole into words—wisdom speaking. The wisdom of the ancient poet, poetic wisdom, is a speech of the whole of things that is formed in images. The philosopher or metaphysician has as an ideal the replacement of this with a speech of ideas, but the whole remains. The speech of the whole gives us the story of the real. But what of virtue?

Autobiography

The modern philosopher is a lover of knowledge, not of wisdom. In this way the modern philosopher is only a kind of impersonator, who steps upon the stage of the theater of the world in a mask, and so trades upon the ancient meaning of the love of wisdom while never understanding it. To love knowledge is easily to love argument, because knowledge, in opposition to wisdom, is the application of the mind to the part, not to the whole of things. To know is to know something specific; what is to be known can be formulated as a problem to be solved, something subject to and in fact requiring method to test out supposition. An argument is always a partial thought; it is never a thought of the whole. The whole is something about which a speech can be made, but it can never be the subject of argument. There is no *argument of the whole*. Like Leviathan, there is no hook large enough to catch it; there is no argument large enough to hold all its premisses, great and small.

It is no accident that modern ethics lives *after virtue*, because once wisdom is given up for knowledge we can consider various arguments about ethical issues and about various ethical rules and criteria, but the questions of the good life and the best life cannot be raised. These require a thought of the whole and they themselves presuppose a love of the whole, a love of wisdom. From Vico's point of view, anyone who would attempt to make a speech or live a life by the geometrical method engages in a form of rational madness. As *eloquentia* is dismissed in the founding of modern philosophy, so *prudentia* (Gk. *phronēsis*) is dismissed in modern ethics. Prudence becomes an undiscussed topic in modern ethics, as is the topic of human dignity, which was so much discussed in the moral discourses of the Renaissance. Prudence, to the extent that it receives any consideration in modern ethics, is understood as a semi-ethical or semi-moral manner of acting, not as an ideal to be sought in and of itself. Prudence in modern thinking loses all of its classical connection with the power of foresight, its connection with the wisdom of the civil and the seer.

Wisdom, in contrast to knowledge, is always associated with a guide to action. The wise person is always one who thinks, speaks, and acts in an exemplary process. Scientific knowers or researchers are forever unable to see how the manners of thinking that provide them with so much success in grasping the world of the object fail to apply with equal success in grasping the world of the subject, the world of civil things in which the knowers themselves live. Modern ethics, paralleling modern metaphysics, is a theater of argument. Impressed with knowledge, modern metaphysics gave up on the love of the real as the whole, and, in like manner, modern ethics, also so impressed, gave up on virtue, piety, and dignity for a world of moral problems, the end product of which is the bad infinity of applied ethics and the total loss of human character and the good life, both of which are built on the notion of civil wisdom.

The recovery of virtue and the real, itself perhaps impossible in the age of modern barbarism, requires the reconnection of philosophy with the ancient project of self-knowledge. Knowledge, in combination with the concept of the self, is used here not in the above-mentioned sense of partial thought but as equivalent to wisdom or the love of wisdom. To claim that the object of philosophy is self-knowledge is to claim that philosophical knowledge is at base autobiographical. Autobiographical literature, understood in a broad sense of saying things about one's life, exists from ancient times forward, even though the terminological concept *autobiographical* is quite recent. Autobiography is a completely modern term, unknown in Greek or Latin, which comes into modern European languages at the very end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. It is coined in English from the Greek *autos* (self), *bios* (life), and *graphē* (writing) to describe a kind of literature of the self, the writing of one's own life, a self-biography. The term spread to French, German, Italian, and so forth. The many questions surrounding autobiography both as a literary form and as a philosophical idea go beyond the scope of these remarks.⁷ I wish to focus here on only two ideas: first, that philosophies are autobiographies, and second, that the extent to which arguments are embedded in such autobiographies determines the extent to which the philosopher is a genuine lover of wisdom.

In saying that philosophies are autobiographies I mean that it is a way to view the status of any philosophy. The philosopher who creates a philosophy, unlike the non-philosopher, has as part of his or her autobiography the philosophy that he or she creates. The philosopher's philosophy is a portrait of who the philosopher is. In the end it is a projection of the philosopher's self, or it may be viewed in this way, regardless of the intention of the philosopher. This holds even for a philosophical cosmology. For example, the figure of a demiurge in a cosmology can be read as a portrait of the philosopher's own existence, following the ancient view that the philosopher is a being between god and human. All philosophy, whether declared so or not, is an activity of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge involves the dictum

subscribed to by Cicero and the humanists, that wisdom is a knowledge of things human and divine. Self-knowledge in its ancient sense involves a knowledge of what the self is and what it is not, a knowledge of the natural and of the divine as related to the civil and the human.

The great philosophies of the past are but so many portraits of the human condition, so many *specula* of the self, fundamental “spying outs” of the internal structure of the self’s existence. Philosophies, like myths, are denials of time. The internal architecture of the self of the philosopher who authored the philosophy is present in it. I mean this not in psychological terms but in terms of a metaphysics of the self. In this way, then, all philosophy is autobiographical. To say that the tacit meaning of any philosophy is to write the autobiography of the self is to endorse the ideal that philosophy is the love of wisdom and that wisdom is characterized by the view that the true is the whole.

Narration and Argument

The object of philosophy in its pursuit of a knowledge of things human and divine is not to discover certain truths but to reveal in language the sense of the *True*. Only when we possess a sense of the true do we have access to a knowledge of the real and of virtue. The ideal of philosophical thought is to make the whole of things appear to the mind through language, even though all true philosophers will say that their philosophies were never written down. As Whitehead says, “No language can be anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience. The position of metaphysics in the development of culture cannot be understood without remembering that no verbal statement is the adequate expression of a proposition.”⁸

The language of the philosopher, like language itself, never owns the real or the good. In this sense the philosopher is like the poet, and poetry, as said above, is always the starting point of true metaphysics. Our literal-minded philosophers, however, believe in the power of language to contain the truth, and in this belief they are led to the love of argument—as if argument could literally produce a truth.

The literal-minded and commonsensical, who never learn to walk on their heads, produce philosophies, too, and these are also portraits of the self. But having given up the true and the whole as the ideal of philosophy, the self that is embedded in such reasoning is a fragmented self. The literal-minded philosopher produces a self, suffering from the bad infinity, that from which literal-minded arguments also suffer. We all become, as Kant would have the readers of his first *Critique* become, “fellow workers” in the project of distinction-making

and argument-building.⁹ Informing this is the eternal hope of the perfect set of distinctions, the knock-down argument. It is a comic activity, not tragic. Because of the belief in this possibility of a happy ending we can attempt to prove that all that we ever thought to be thus and so is in fact, with complete certainty, just that. Where, then, does argument stand in relation to the philosopher of the “true infinity” of the whole?

If not blinded by a philosophical education that has directed the student always to seek out the arguments in past philosophies, the reader of philosophy notes easily that the great works of philosophy do not begin by saying that they will present an argument. Great philosophers simply begin their works with an opening sentence that claims to state the truth and then proceed to tell the reader about the nature of their subject, the subject ultimately being, in some way, the nature of virtue and the real. In the reasonings of these great philosophers there usually are arguments, or passages that are like arguments, to be found. In this sense such philosophers are in no way misologists. But these arguments are part of the ongoing great speech that is philosophy itself. These arguments are imbedded in and always informed by the speech or narration, the story of virtue and the real that the philosopher has to tell.

What holds a philosophy together is its narrative aspect. The narrative it expresses is its lifeblood that animates its arguments and gives them interest. Whitehead’s view—that it is more important that a proposition be interesting than be true, but that truth adds interest—can apply to whole philosophies.¹⁰ Arguments are not interesting in themselves; they are only interesting for the role they play in some narrative. If an argument is examined by itself, it is ultimately interesting only when it is brought back into some narrative of which it is a part. Philosophers in the analytic tradition often claim that certain arguments are just interesting in themselves. But my point holds even in such cases. In such cases there actually is a narrative in which these arguments that are “just interesting” exist. This narrative may be no more than the articulation that could be done of the analytic *weltanschauung* itself or some more specific part of it as applied to the self, the mind, ethics, or things. The reasoning required of simple puzzles is not philosophical reasoning. Philosophical reasoning always progresses toward a story of what is, even if it does so in parts.

Conclusion

The view I am advancing sees philosophical reasoning as essentially meditation. Every philosophy is an attempt to meditate through a question to an answer. For total philosophies, or philosophy of the whole, the question is without limits. Arguments must be mediated within some context that is not itself argued—but

there. The form of this context, what holds the specific arguments together, or makes them interesting, is the narrative dimension. The natural form of the meditation is the narration. The view that philosophy is about arguments is correct if it also acknowledges that arguments live within the other forms of speech, especially the narrative. These forms of speech are not part of argument; arguments are part of them.

It is a barbarism when philosophy does not offer us the love of wisdom. Thus philosophical speeches centered on argument alone, or nearly alone, are meager fare that offers fragmented autobiographies. What we encounter in the lovers of argument, then, are fragmented selves, overcome with and happy in a fragmented world of modern life often offering only small and tiresome speeches. What we encounter in the great philosophies is relief from this misfortune of modernity. The quarrel between the ancients and the moderns in the eighteenth century was an attempt to dismiss the ancient conceptions of thought and speech in favor of the modern. In this sense it was a healthy and honest quarrel. Now, however, the sense of the quarrel, if it can indeed be said even to exist, has changed. The ancients are now simply re-read as moderns and, in the study of philosophy, as I have tried to suggest, this takes the form of over-attraction to argument, and the loss of the love of wisdom as the self-knowledge of things human and divine.¹¹

CHAPTER 6

Philosophical Aesthetics

The Philosophical Imaginary

Is there an aesthetics of philosophy? Does philosophical discourse have a foundation in sense and sensibility?

Put another way: Does philosophy require the power of the imagination and the product of this power—the image? Or is philosophy the product of the pure concept, the rational idea? Does philosophical reason rest upon a logic that resides in thought alone that is expressed essentially in principles and arguments disconnected from images and sentiment?

The French philosopher Michèle Le Doeuff says: “Whether one looks for a characterization of philosophical discourse to Plato, to Hegel or to Bréhier, one always meets with a reference to the rational, the concept, the argued, the logical, the abstract. Even when a certain coyness leads some authorities to pretend that they do not know what philosophy is, no agnosticism remains about what philosophy is not. Philosophy is not a story, not a pictorial description, not a work of pure literature. Philosophical discourse is inscribed and declares its status as philosophy through a break with myth, fable, the poetic, the domain of the image.”¹

Le Doeuff continues: “If, however, one goes looking for this philosophy in the texts which are meant to embody it, the least that can be said is that it is not to be found there in a pure state. We shall *also* find statues that breathe the scent of roses, comedies, tragedies, architects, foundations, dwellings, doors and windows, sand, navigators, various musical instruments, islands, clocks, horses, donkeys and even a lion, representatives of every craft and trade, scenes of sea and storm, forests and trees: in short, a whole pictorial world sufficient to decorate even the driest ‘History of Philosophy.’”²

Le Doeuff points to Hegel as an example of the claim that the sole form of philosophy is thought. Yet the works of Hegel, like those of Plato, are full of images. Plato and Hegel are masters of metaphor. Despite his mastery of metaphor, Plato in the *Republic* uses his doctrine of *eidos* to criticize the power of *eikon* to present truth. Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* uses his doctrine of the *Begriff* to claim that the *Bild* cannot produce the science of the absolute. Plato and Hegel say one thing in their texts but in the texts themselves they do another. Plato's dialogues are filled with metaphors and likely stories from the Ring of Gyges to the metaphor of the Sun to the tale of Atlantis, as are Hegel's works, from the "night in which all cows are black" to the phrenological skull to the owl of Minerva that flies only at the falling of dusk.

How are we to comprehend the extremes of philosophical doctrine on the one hand and the discourse that expresses it on the other? Is the discourse simply the outer shell of the doctrine, inessential to its truth, or does the doctrine itself require for its truth all that is needed for its proper statement?

I wish to seek the answer to this by connecting Plato to Hegel, using Vico as a middle term. My claim is that philosophical discourse as well as philosophy itself depends upon an aesthetic that cannot be overcome by reason, that there is a philosophical imaginary that necessarily accompanies philosophical rationality. The concept, the idea always has a shadow, a doppelgänger through which the aesthetic haunts reason.

I take "aesthetic" (*aisthesis*) in the sense in which Alexander Baumgarten originally defined it: as the study of how things are cognized by means of the senses. In his *Philosophical Meditations on Poetry* (1735) Baumgarten says "*things known* are to be known by the superior faculty as the object of logic; *things perceived* [are to be known by the inferior faculty, as the object] of the science of perception, or aesthetic."³ He is echoing Plotinus here: "Since this nature is twofold, partly intelligible and partly perceptible, it is better for the soul to be in the intelligible, but all the same, since it has this kind of nature, it is necessarily bound to be able to participate in the perceptible."⁴ In the *Aesthetica* (1758) Baumgarten calls aesthetics not only the science of sensate cognition, but "the theory of the liberal arts, the logic of the lower faculty, the art of thinking beautifully, the art of the analogue of reason."⁵ I wish to see how this art found throughout the liberal arts specifically enters into and directs philosophical thought.

Plato's Quarrel

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates and his interlocutors decide to make a city in speech, a polis in logos. Cicero says Socrates is the first to bring philosophy down from

the heavens and into cities and homes. Plato opens the *Timaeus* with a brief recapitulation of the main political and social features of the *Republic* and proceeds to make a cosmos in speech. It is the *Timaeus* Plato holds in his hand in Raffaello's *School of Athens*. These two dialogues are a complete speech, a full cycle of philosophical thought.

How does Plato accomplish such feats? In the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*, as in Plato's dialogues generally, the text passes back and forth between the exchange of questions and answers and argument and the telling of likely stories and the relation of myths. Logos has a counterpart in mythos. Platonic dialogue is neither philosophy nor poetry as they are conventionally understood, nor is it simply a combination of both. The dialogue is an organism of thought that will not let the reader take either of these directions fully. The reader is caught between their two poles and as the mind is taken up in the middle of the dialogue's movement, the mind's eye comes to see that neither the argument nor the image can fully form the true. The partiality of each is completed by the other. The dialogue is a speech of the two in the one. Every argument must be dramatized and every dramatic image must be understood. The Platonic dialogue causes the mind to see what is there. It alters vision.

The philosophical dialogue as a way to write philosophy begins and ends with Plato. Berkeley and Hume have written works in dialogue form, but they are in fact trains of thought spoken by invented characters and do not truly catch the mind in the tension between logos and mythos. They remain, for better or for worse, clever works. Once the ancient world is lost, the power of language to form the dialogue is lost, but the principle of the dialogue survives as the thought of the two in the one, found in speculative science.

What Socrates discovered—the device of the question coupled with the likely story—survives as the basis of speculation. The form of speculative thought is the soliloquy or the oration. By *speculation* I mean that philosophy that takes the true as the whole and regards the mind as alive in the movement between opposites. My two examples, Vico and Hegel, both profess to have discovered a new science of wisdom. Each of their sciences is based upon a solution to the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. This quarrel is the key to Platonic philosophy and it is the key to the modern humanistic and speculative version of philosophy.

What is the basis of this ancient quarrel? Its *locus classicus* is the tenth book of the *Republic*, in which Socrates suggests that we makers of the city in speech say that there is an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry in order not to appear too harsh or crude for having sent poetry from the city because of its character. Socrates admits that he is charmed by poetry, especially that of Homer, but that he was determined by the argument to ban the poets because they play upon the passions and are directed by pleasure, and because they imitate what

they can see, whether good or bad or a mixture of good and bad. To say there is an ancient quarrel may be a noble lie, but it is our lie—what the philosophers will tell the poets and the public in order to preserve philosophy.

Poetry has been put on trial throughout the *Republic* and at the end Socrates says he and the makers of such a city would be delighted to receive the poets back from exile if they could present an argument without meter, showing that they should be in a city with good laws. The argument, he says, could be presented by the poets themselves or presented on their behalf by lovers of poetry. They would need to show that poetry is not only pleasant but beneficial to regimes and to human life.

There appears to be no expectation that this argument will be forthcoming, even if there were someone present to make it. Philosophy has set itself up as judge and has dictated the terms, which are that there can be no poetic defense of poetry, for the speech of poetry's apology could not be properly made without the use of meter. The poets take pleasure in and imitate what they see, but a defense of poetry must be made in terms of what cannot be seen, what is beyond the senses. Virtue, the idea, and the true require a grasp of what is unseen. They cannot be apprehended by a language that is confined to the visible or the senses. The poets or the lovers of poetry, then, would need to speak metaphysically, for metaphysics is predicated upon grasping the difference between *seems* and *is*.

Why should philosophy be so concerned to resolve this quarrel? One answer is that poetry is a danger to the polis. Since poetry portrays the conduct of gods and humans one time as good, and another as bad or as a mixture of good and bad, poetry can provide no standard of virtue or wisdom. For poetry to guide the polis is to allow the passions to rule, which is no rule at all. Because philosophy has an interest in good politics, it has an interest in poetry. But more than this is at issue in this quarrel. Philosophy is not the love of politics; it is the love of wisdom. Philosophy is not ultimately concerned with the polis; it is concerned ultimately with itself. Philosophy will do whatever it can to preserve itself, and as a part of this preservation, to persuade others of its attachment to wisdom. Philosophy shares with poetic and rhetoric a dependence on the power of the word. Whatever philosophy does or can do is accomplished in language.

The Platonic Socrates says that the poets, like painters, are imitators. They do not make a thing as it truly is. Perhaps a thing as it truly is, as *eidos* or *idea*, Socrates says, might be produced by a god. Unlike the poets, craftsmen produce tangible things. What the poet makes is a phantom (*eidolon*). Imitation (*mimesis*) at the hands of the painter or poet is imitation of how a thing looks rather than of its truth. Because the maker of the phantom, the imitator, concentrates on what a thing looks like it is, the imitator understands nothing of what it is. The imitator who concentrates on the look of a thing has no power to pass from what a thing seems to be to what it is.

The poet's power is to make (*poiein*, to make and to compose poetry) in words. The philosopher's power is also to make in words. The philosopher, unlike the lawgiver or the politician, does not make an actual city. The philosopher makes a city in speech. Is the philosopher a new kind of poet, less charming than Homer, or is the philosopher a new kind of maker? In the attack on the poets we are not told how the philosopher uses words; we are only told how the poet's use of words misses the truth. But we can learn how the philosopher approaches truth in words by observing the process of the Platonic dialogue, and especially, the conduct of Socrates in it.

The philosopher is not a god and thus philosophical making does not produce the idea or *eidos* itself. By one account Pythagoras, in coining the word philosopher (*philosophos*), said that only the gods were wise. The philosopher is a lover of wisdom. True wisdom would require the power to make the *eidos* or to make a perfect knowledge of it. The philosopher is an imitator but an imitator of what is, not of what looks like what is. Poetry is a danger to philosophy because both are acts of imitation. They differ in the object imitated. The philosopher is not proficient in statecraft or in the ordinary crafts of making things. Plato's philosopher-king is an irony and a paradox. Although philosophy is needed in the city, the philosopher's love of truth cannot be combined with the actions of the politician that are needed to rule. The philosophic life requires the polis but it is not *of* the polis. The philosopher does share with the craftsman the fact that something is made based directly on the *eidos*. What the craftsman makes is an actual thing visible to the body's eye; the philosopher makes an object visible to the mind's eye.

The philosopher is a maker of knowledge, at least of a knowledge of human things, as Socrates professes to possess in the *Apology*. The philosopher is not wise, because wisdom is a knowledge of things divine and human. The philosopher, as a lover of wisdom, does not have a knowledge of the divine because the philosopher does not make the *eidos*, but the philosopher must know the difference between the divine and the human. There is no knowledge of the human simply as such; to know the human the philosopher stands between the divine and the human. The philosopher like the poet appeals to the emotions. Nothing in philosophy is done without passion and the passion (*philia*) for wisdom is inscribed into philosophy's own name.

The philosopher is a craftsman of language. Philosophy is performative. There is no way to learn philosophy from the outside, apart from entering into it. Yet, as any philosopher who is not literal-minded would say, his philosophy was never written down. The imitation of the real is not the real; it only helps to make the real visible to the mind's eye. The philosopher like the rhetorician seeks to persuade. Persuasion is the power that lies only in words and it is the only power that the philosopher commands. Like the rhetorician and the poet, the

philosopher seeks to delight, instruct, and move. The philosopher seeks to do this by means of full-blooded ideas, and in so doing to make the invisible appear within the visible. Philosophical activity so directed is inherently metaphysical and speculative.

Vico's Wisdom

Vico's *New Science* is also a city in speech.⁶ In Vico's case it is "the great city of the human race," a phrase he takes from Augustine and ultimately from Plato. Vico calls Plato one of his "four authors."⁷ Plato's city in the *Republic* is a city for the gods or the children of gods, and it is constructed in accordance with nature. Vico's city is the city of "ideal eternal history" (*storia ideale eterna*) constructed in accordance with the common nature of nations and governed by the cycles of providence. All nations have a common pattern of development through three ages: the age of gods, in which the world is formed in terms of a pantheon of gods, the age of heroes, in which society is formed in terms of the deeds and characters of heroes who embody the virtues of human conduct, and the age of humans, in which the gods and heroes are replaced by the products of cognitive thought and customs are replaced by written laws. When the original *corso* of these three ages comes to an end in the life of a nation, the nation undergoes a *ricorso* of these ages now built upon the recollection and reformulation of the original cycle.

Vico's great city is governed by the "natural law of the peoples" (*il diritto delle genti*), which is the application to history of the sense of natural law found in later Roman jurisprudence as *ius gentium*—those elements that all systems of law are said actually to have in common with Roman law as distinguished from *ius naturale* (abstract universal rights) and *ius civile* (positive law made by legislative authority). All nations in the great city of history develop by the same principle of cycles, but they develop at different rates. This ideal eternal history shared by all nations is evidence of the presence of providence in history. Vico subscribes to the first conception of the *Digest* that jurisprudence is philosophy. There is a "jurisprudence of the human race" that is the divine order of history just as there is a divine order of nature as claimed by Galileo and the founders of the modern science of nature.⁸

The success of a science of the great city of the human race depends upon a solution to the Platonic quarrel with the poets. It cannot be accomplished by a doctrine of reason alone. The Platonic quarrel places wisdom against poetry. The love of wisdom as it can be realized in the Platonic dialogues requires the metaphors and the sensibilities and the sentiments they evoke for access to the wisdom of the forms. Poetry is disciplined but not eliminated and it continues to shadow thought. Vico makes a new start by joining poetry and wisdom into

“poetic wisdom.” This is an original form of thought from which the rational wisdom of the philosophers separates itself as the nation develops from the ages of gods and heroes into the age of humans. Vico declares that the poets are not philosophers. The wisdom of the poets is that of the first two ages in which the world is formed by the power of imagination (*fantasia*). The first humans form their world through “imaginative universals.” These are the “poetic characters” of the fables. The first humans of the gentile nations think in metaphors not in concepts or “intelligible universals” (*universali intelligibili*). Vico says that every metaphor is a fable in brief.⁹

The myths or fables are the first truths of the world. It is through them that the human world is first made. We can have a science (*scienza*) of the human world because we originally make this world. It is not possible to have a science of objects we do not make. It is not possible to have a science in this sense of the natural world because we do not make its objects. What we would call natural science is in fact a kind of consciousness (*coscienza*) achieved by the methods of empirical investigation and experiment. Our knowledge of the natural world may be described as a kind of “witnessing consciousness.” The first humans, Vico claims, were poets who not only formed the world through myths but also formed the first histories in their myths. Thus Vico inverts Aristotle’s dictum that poetry is more philosophical than history because poetry treats of the universal and history of the particular. The first histories are the myths of humanity, which are formed through imaginative universals in which particulars are grasped as universals.

The truths of Vico’s science are made by recollecting the truths present in the myths and the first speech of the nations. Vico’s text is a theatre of memory in which all the human world is recollected and ordered in terms of his ideal eternal history. Vico says that memory is imagination, *la memoria è la stessa che la fantasia*.¹⁰ He says that the proof of his science depends upon the art of the Muses whose mother is Memory (Mnemosyne). He invites us to make the new science for ourselves by that principle that it “had, has, and will have to be” (*dovette, deve, dovrà*).¹¹ He takes the power traditionally attributed to the Muses to sing of what was, is, and is to come and transforms it into a sequence of necessity or a knowledge *per causas*. In this he is following Aristotle’s conception of recollection as different from memory understood as the act of simple recall. Aristotle says: “When one wishes to recollect, that is what he will do: he will try to obtain a beginning of movement whose sequel shall be the movement which he desires to reawaken.”¹²

Hegel’s Art

Hegel’s system of science, at least the first part of it, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is a science of recollection (*Erinnerung*). Hegel describes his work as such in the

final chapter on “absolute knowing” (*absolutes Wissen*) and in this chapter he also speaks of his phenomenology as a “gallery of images” (*Galerie von Bildern*).¹³ This assertion goes back to his call for a “mythology of reason” (*Mythologie der Vernunft*) in the fragment known as “The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism” and his assertion there that poetry is the “teacher of humanity” (*die Lehrerin der Menschheit*).¹⁴ In the little-known fragment “Über Mythologie, Volksgeist und Kunst” he calls Mnemosyne the “absolute Muse.”¹⁵ Throughout the *Phenomenology* recollection is what moves the dialectic ahead and makes *Aufhebung* possible. Forgetting always forces consciousness to begin again from the beginning. Consciousness continually forgets itself and realizing the delusions present in a form it has assumed it must obtain a new beginning, must reestablish its power of recollection. Absolute knowing is not to forget, to hold all the shapes of *Geist* in mind. How is this to be done? The form of absolute knowing is the *Begriff*, but how does the *Begriff* maintain itself once consciousness has attained it?

Within Hegel’s own discourse is a dialectic between *Begriff* and *Bild*, between the form of *begriffliches Denken* that is emerging through the images of *bildhaftes Denken* that allows recollective access to the stages of consciousness in Hegel’s phenomenology—*Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*, *die verkehrte Welt*, *das unglückliche Bewusstsein*, *das geistige Tierreich*, *die schöne Seele*, and so forth. This gallery of images is the constant shadow of the *Begriff*.

In the “System-Program” Hegel proposes a version of the city in speech.¹⁶ He says: “The whole of metaphysics falls for the future within *Morals* [*die Moral*]” and that *Ethik* “will be nothing less than a complete system of all *Ideen*.” The first Idea is the presentation of myself as an absolutely free entity. This self stands within the world and thus Hegel says that he must “descend into the realms of physics,” asking the question: “How must a world be constituted for a moral entity?” He will proceed from nature to the work of man (*Menschenwerk*), but in his account the state will be seen as something abstract and mechanical and not the ultimate embodiment of the human *Werk* and its freedom. The *Ideen* are alive in *Vernunft* and *Geist*; their reality is beyond the state with its forms of constitution, government, and legal system. Hegel says he wishes to take the Idea of Beauty in its Platonic sense and says, “I am now convinced that the highest act of Reason, the one through which it encompasses all Ideas, is an aesthetic act.” Beauty becomes the middle term, so to speak, that allows the True and the Good to be joined.

Hegel says: “The philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet. Those without aesthetic sense are our literal-minded philosophers [*unsere Buchstabenphilosophen*]. The philosophy of spirit is an aesthetic philosophy.” Hegel says poetry must become at the end what she was at the beginning—*Lehrerin der Menschheit*. He says, he wishes to advance “an idea which, as far as

I know, has never occurred to anyone else—we must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be in the service of the Ideas, it must be a mythology of *Reason*.” He says “mythology must become philosophical in order to make the people rational [*vernünftig*], and philosophy must become mythological in order to make philosophers sensible [*sinnlich*].”

Does Hegel ever give up these views, which he likely wrote in Berne in the summer of 1796, when he was twenty-six, after reading Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters*? On first glance it would seem that he did give up such views, for ten years later, in writing the *Phenomenology*, Hegel distinguishes the ultimate stage of consciousness of “absolute knowing” in which the *Begriff* attains the form of the *Begriff* from the *Vorstellungen* of Religion, which includes the aesthetic or *Kunst-Religion*. Hegel does hold to the view that Beauty is a higher form than the forms of the state which appear in the stages of *Geist* proper within the *Phenomenology*. This is made clear in both the *Philosophy of Spirit* in the *Encyclopaedia* and in the *Philosophy of Right*. The forms of absolute spirit are beyond those of moral life and the state. The poet and the philosopher are beyond politics for Hegel.

The *Phenomenology* is a mythology of reason. Hegel’s gallery of images is a philosophical imaginary that accompanies all the stages of philosophical rationality as it emerges to the level of speculative science in absolute knowing. As said above there is a dialectic within Hegel’s text between *bildhaftes Denken* and *begriffliches Denken*. There is never a unity of these two modes of presentation nor is *Bild* ever replaced by *Begriff*. This is true even at the stage of absolute knowing. The entire work concludes with a master image taken from Schiller’s “Die Freundschaft.” Hegel’s last words of the text are those of the poet. Throughout all the works of Hegel’s system there is a use of images that the reader can easily come to see once the reader begins to look for them rather than to look past them, as most readers of philosophy and especially of Hegel, have been trained to do. Even in the *Science of Logic*, the book of the Idea, images are there directing vision. Consider Hegel’s famous metaphor of the “bad infinity” (*die schlechte Unendlichkeit*). In explaining how being and nothing are equally indeterminate, the beginning point upon which all the *Logic* turns, Hegel says, “Pure light and pure darkness are two voids which are the same thing.”¹⁷ Hegel, like all great philosophers, goes to school with the poets, and the reader is continually directed to the concept by the image. For Hegel poetry becomes part of philosophy.

Given Hegel’s own philosophical aesthetics, what can be said about his doctrine of the end of art, the well-known view that Hegel announces in the introduction and conclusion of his lectures on *Aesthetics*? In essence, Hegel claims that with the development of the romantic art of emotion, art no longer unites itself with anything objective. Art becomes satisfied with the subjective world of emotions and deep feeling; this finally produces the standpoint of comedy in which

the subject can simply confront its own reality through the conditions it itself creates. Hegel says: "Yet on this peak comedy leads at the same time to the dissolution [*Auflösung*] of art altogether."¹⁸ In the introduction Hegel says art has ceased to be the highest need of *Geist*. The self-assured subjective personality cancels everything not correspondent with itself. Hegel's claim is not that artists will stop producing works of art now that this point has been proclaimed, but rather that consciousness in its form as art reaches a limit. To obtain the object again consciousness must pass into another form. Art must move through religion to philosophy.

Light may be shed on this by Hegel's remarks in the above-mentioned fragment on "Mythologie, Volksgeist und Kunst," which dates from his Jena period.¹⁹ In calling Mnemosyne the "absolute Muse," Hegel further equates this with art. Art gives us the "externally perceivable, seeable, and hearable forms of spirit." He says: "This Muse is the generally expressed consciousness of a people. The work of art of mythology propagates itself in living tradition. As peoples grow in the liberation of their consciousness, so the mythological work of art continuously grows and clarifies and matures." In contrast to the work of art of mythology and its objectivity in forming the world is the work of art as the product of the artist's subjectivity. Hegel says: "When in our time the living world does not form the work of art within it, the artist must place his imagination in a past world; he must dream a world, but the character of dreaming, of not being alive, of the past, is plainly stamped on his work." In the lectures on *Aesthetics* Hegel says art "remains for us a thing of the past."²⁰

"Imagination is memory" is a view that Hegel as well as Vico holds, that goes back to Aristotle: "If asked, of which among the parts of the soul memory is a function, we reply: manifestly of that part to which imagination [*phantasia*] also appertains; and all objects of which there is imagination are in themselves objects of memory."²¹ The mythological work of art is memory which enters into and shapes living tradition. In our time the work of art is memory but only in the sense of a past recalled by the artist. It was the equation of imagination and memory in Vico that attracted Joyce to his *New Science*. But for the modern, art is like a dream, an event of the subjective personality, not what is in living tradition. In Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* of the *Encyclopaedia*, art is the form of the absolute spirit that is perceivable, seeable, and hearable.

Did Hegel give up his early view of Beauty as the highest idea of spirit and of philosophy needing to become aesthetic? I do not think he has given it up, but he has modified it. He did not give it up because of his principle of *Aufhebung*. Art is the immediate form of absolute spirit which, passing through the form of religion, is *aufgehoben* in philosophy as spirit's final form. Philosophy remains in a tension with the sensible form of the absolute, just as philosophical

reason, the medium of which is the *Begriff* stands continually in a tension with the gallery of images that is exhibited throughout Hegel's works.

Hegel's solution to the ancient quarrel is to acknowledge the wisdom of the poets and to set poetry in motion as the teacher of speculative reason because it originally is the teacher of all humanity. But the lessons are learned on reason's terms, for reason develops the dialectic it has with the images of the poets and controls them through the logic of its course. Dialectic takes the subjective beyond itself and makes self-knowledge an objective process. When philosophy comes on the scene it truly is the end of art, for art cannot maintain itself apart from its dialectic with philosophy. Art, which as mythology once maintained itself in the living tradition, in our time is alive only through its attachment to speculative reason.

Philosophical Education

If philosophical thinking is in constant need of the image in order to go beyond it to the concept, what does this process suggest for philosophical education? There are, I think at least two central principles that follow from what I have called *philosophical aesthetics*. The first concerns how one may attempt to produce original philosophical ideas; the second concerns how to approach the comprehension of philosophical writings.

To write a poem requires a beginning point. That beginning point is always the appearance to the mind of a metaphor.²² The poem emerges as a result of the playing out of the metaphor through other metaphors and tropic language. The metaphor comes from nowhere. It is not the result of a choice or decision on the poet's part. It simply appears as an unexpected entity, a guest at the door. This phenomenon of appearance seems likely to correspond to what the ancients regarded as a visit from the Muses, the basis of the ancient poets' inspiration.

Socrates says in the *Phaedrus* that the Muses also inspire the philosophical life.²³ To attempt to say something original in philosophy we must, as Collingwood said, "go to school with the poets in order to learn the use of language. . . . The principles on which the philosopher uses language are those of poetry."²⁴ Philosophy and poetry begin at the same point—with the metaphor. The metaphor approached in this way is "metaphysical," not "epistemological."²⁵ It is metaphysical in character in that it is a new sense of "isness," a new sense of being. The mind has something before it that is immediate. Consider the Homeric metaphor "the rosey fingered dawn." As we gain distance from this metaphor we can move from its "isness" to its sense as a simile such that it expresses a "likeness" between the spreading out of the fingers of a hand and the spreading out

of the rays of the first light of dawn. And there is a likeness between the color of the rose and the color of the morning light. The simile requires an epistemological distance. It is the beginning of a logical comparison between entities.²⁶

The philosopher proceeds to develop the metaphor differently than the poet. The philosopher produces a conceptual structure. Stephen Pepper has captured this philosophical sense of metaphor in his observation of “root metaphors”—the idea that there are several fundamental metaphors or similes that underlie the great types of metaphysical systems. According to Pepper, the world is like the process of formation, or like a mechanism, or like an organism, or like a historic event.²⁷ Pepper’s root metaphor is itself a metaphor, and one that in principle can apply to lines of philosophical inquiry that are more limited than the creation of a total metaphysical system.

As a single example, suppose one attempts to contribute a new line of reasoning to the philosophy of language. The metaphor that comes to mind is the “living word.” This is reminiscent of the “word become flesh,” but it is different. With mental distance this metaphor becomes the simile that a word is like a life. Anything alive has a natural career of birth, maturity, and decline. Words have etymologies. They appear in language and develop multiple meanings and ambiguities as they are used and exist through time and tradition. At some point a word can become obsolete, or some of its meanings can become obsolete. It declines in the power of its meaning or it becomes archaic and unknown to current speakers. This sense of linguistic life can be connected to the question of meaning and truth.

To investigate the truth or viability of a claim we must determine what its words mean. What Locke means by an “idea” or Hume by an “impression” are not the current connotations. This could lead us to a sense of how philosophy that aims at the general and universal (the logical) must be tied to the certain and particular (the philological). In educating students to think philosophically on their own we can attempt to make them aware of the importance of metaphor in this process. I agree with Aristotle, that metaphor cannot as such be taught. But we can attempt to attune students to metaphor and their natural powers for it. We can attempt to instill in them a sense of the *ars topica*, as opposed to centering philosophical education exclusively in the *ars critica*—which makes them think that philosophy is always a matter of argumentation.

Argumentation without a larger context of thought is a dead end. All argument is inherently antinomous, for it is not beyond human wit to create a counter-argument for every argument advanced. Criticism, although valuable and indispensable in its place, is, as such, a “bad infinity”; it is an endless process that will finally grind away at precisely nothing. It is a scandal to criticism that it cannot produce its own starting points by logical means. Beginnings are always topical and most often metaphorical.

How metaphor in philosophy may be taught is tied to my second point of philosophical education. The ability to think philosophically depends upon the ability to read philosophical books. In philosophy as elsewhere, good thinking and good writing of one's own ideas depend upon the good reading of the work of others. Most philosophical education directs the student immediately to look for the arguments in a text. Arguments are sought out and argued over. No attention is given to style, to how things are said in the work, or to the images the text embodies in order to bring forth its subject matter. For example, in teaching Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the student is taken directly to the claims underlying Hobbes's materialism or his claim of a state of nature. No special attention is given to Hobbes's frontispiece, to the fact that his title is the first use of "leviathan" in a secular sense, to the relationship of Hobbes's project to the Book of Job from which the term is derived. Little attention is given to his specific use of "covenant," its biblical connotation, and the image that it implies.

In teaching Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* the student is immediately directed to the problems of how a knowledge claim can be verified in terms of clarity and distinctness, the sense in which the assertion of the existence of the "I" is an instance of such a claim, the modifications made on the cosmological and ontological proofs for God, the sense in which Cartesian doubt is hypothetical, not truly skeptical, and so forth. No attention is given to the paradox that Descartes, in advocating his four-step method as the only criterion for certainty and knowledge, and which excludes the fields of humanistic thought, says that the reader may treat his work itself as a fable or a history (*fable, histoire*)!²⁸ Descartes conveys his thoughts to the reader in the strongest rhetorical terms: the famous image of himself in the stove-heated room (*poêle*) in Germany, the trope of the ego, and his use of the "stage of the world"—the *theatrum mundi*. The dominant metaphor for Descartes' thought is light, the "light of nature" that invades human nature and allows the ego to see itself as certain of itself. Descartes, the most anti-rhetorical of modern thinkers, rivals Plato in his use of rhetoric to portray his ideas to the reader.

Conclusion

The teacher of philosophical texts can lead the student to look for two things within them before proceeding to the traditional concern of critically evaluating the arguments and claims they contain: the image and the question. What are the images (the root metaphors) that guide the author's thought? In Le Doeuff's terms, what is the author's particular philosophical imaginary?

As mentioned above, Socrates is the inventor of the likely story, on the one hand, which is the retelling of a myth, and the question, or *elenchus*, on the

other, the interplay of which occurs in so many instances in the Platonic–Socratic dialogues. Collingwood not only claims that there is a basic connection between philosophy and poetry, he also is one of the rare thinkers to claim that philosophy is a process of questions and answers, that the key to philosophical thinking is the question, not the argument.²⁹ The question opens the mind to itself. When it is asked, anything is possible. An argument is intended to close off thought; a question continues it. To teach a philosophical text the instructor can direct the student first to look for the images that are there and then to look for the questions that are implicit in them, for to think philosophically the image is never left to speak for itself as it is in poetry. Its purpose is to generate the question that guides the philosopher toward the conceptual formulation of the subject to which the thought and the work is directed.

From this topical approach the critical follows. The arguments to be formulated and evaluated appear in a new light. A great philosophical work can in this way become a treasure-house of ideas to give life to the mind rather than an arid desert of arguments to cross by aligning each one to the next. This topical approach to the comprehension of philosophical works is not entirely new or novel, although it may appear so. Its roots can be found among many of the later Greek writers, in the Romans, and in their revivers, the Italian Renaissance Humanists. This topical-tropical sense of the text can relieve much of the dullness of the contemporary teaching of philosophy and allow philosophy to assume its place as a particular kind of literature, a project of the mind that does not forget its connection to the senses, tongue, and heart.³⁰

CHAPTER 7

Philosophical Memory

Memory and the Rhetorical Conception of Philosophical Systems

The art of memory is a vast subject, about which the modern mind knows very little. In the modern world, the art of memory is largely forgotten. The loss of memory in philosophical circles is coupled with the loss of rapport between philosophy and rhetoric. By *rhetoric* I do not mean the speech of the emotions or the ornamentation of ideas by language; such is the sense of rhetoric taught by Descartes and Locke at the beginning of modern philosophy, through which they affected the divorce between philosophy and rhetoric.¹ The modern philosophical pursuit of truth, whether based on the rationalist or the empiricist conception of the idea, always begins with an assertion of the given. Modern thinking may simply assume the given as there or it may attempt to prove the existence of the given, but the modern mind has lost the sense of the generation of the given, the sense in which the mind can understand why it has something before it, rather than nothing.

Rhetorical concerns are joined to the concern for philosophical truth just at the point where the generation of the given, for thought, is considered. Rhetoric, in the sense that I will use it, concerns the power of the word to give access to the world, rather than the power of the word to embellish a truth already established through rational or empirical means. I hold that such forms of thinking presuppose a more fundamental activity of mind, namely, recollection or the power of memory, a power closely associated with imagination and ingenuity. Philosophical truth requires that we make the world in thought, that we remake what has been made originally in nature and culture so that they become a world of mental forces that act on each other and are alive in language. Understood in

this way, philosophy is divine work. It is a kind of making associated with the gods. The gods make their truths directly in their actions; through the rhetorical power of the word the philosopher brings forth in thought what in actuality can be made only by gods.

Philosophers of the whole are generally concerned with the question of the generation of the given. Those philosophers who are concerned with the true, but not with its fundamental connection with the whole, are still-standing philosophers. They oscillate between the given and thought, but their thought does not move. They do not remake the world; they are faithful to it. Since German Idealism, philosophical interest in the whole has been connected with the concept of philosophical system. Philosophical system, at least in the sense I mean it here, is basically a German idea. It is tied to the German feeling for *Wissenschaft* and the objectively true in philosophy. In German thought before Hegel, in Kantian critique, for example, *Wissenschaft* is pursued by making distinctions. The Kantian philosophy is a system of distinctions. For Hegel, what is *wissenschaftlich* must be self-generated. The true philosophical system must be that which brings forth its own truth from itself. It must make its truth for itself and for the reader. Truth must live as spirit.

Systematic, speculative thought presupposes and is continually dependent upon a less evident power of the mind—recollection, or memory. I wish to suggest that speculation, long thought to be the key to the meaning of the philosophic process, depends at every point upon recollection. For the act of speculation to function, memory is required; more specifically, what we may call a theater of memory must be present.

Bacon recognized the metaphor of the theater in an important, and negative, way in his conception of the Idols of the Theater. These are idols that “have immigrated into men’s minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstration. These I call *Idols of the Theater* because in my judgment all the received systems are but so many stage plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion.”² Bacon further compares the philosophical theater with the theater of the poets: “And in the play of this philosophical theater you may observe the same thing which is found in the theater of the poets, that stories invented for the stage are more compact and elegant, and more as one would wish them to be, than true stories out of history.”³ Bacon is correct. Philosophical systems are stage plays and they are similar to the theater of the poets. Bacon comes close to stating an important truth, but his empirical conception of thought leads him away from it at just the moment he gives it birth as his fourth and most grand idol.

Bacon sees philosophical systems as stage plays and as false to nature as he finds poetry false to real history. The positive truth in Bacon’s observation is that

no philosophy has a life unless it is a stage play and, further, we have no access to the speculative moment of its truth unless it stands before us in a theater. Speculative thought never speaks its piece on its own; it speaks from within a theater. I suggest that philosophical statements are first and foremost not statements of literal truths but verisimilitudes, statements of topical or probable truths. Philosophical systems are not what they seem, and he who does not have a good eye will not recognize them. Those who do not have a good eye begin with reason and fail to see that truths of reason are in reality truths of memory.⁴ Things are not what they seem. Rational truths are really rhetorical truths, and once they are separated from their rhetorical garb they no longer are living truths. The attempt to be objective in philosophy by focusing on rational claims (apart from the rhetorical conditions of their birth and their alma mater, their nourishing mother, rhetoric), is to turn philosophy into a concern for method, to make philosophy into science—into something progressive, representational, and dead.

The sense in which any philosophy is a stage play depends upon its involvement in the general theory of memory, upon its practicing the art of memory. By the art of memory I mean the tradition of thought that Frances Yates describes in her book with that title.⁵ It is also closely related to what Paolo Rossi has called, and used as the title of his work on this tradition, *Clavis Universalis*.⁶ I wish to develop the points I have asserted above by considering the little-known memory theater of the Renaissance thinker Camillo, as it can be connected to Vico, the last thinker in the tradition of Italian humanist philosophy; and further, I wish to ask whether Hegel's masterpiece of the philosophy of the whole, his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), can be seen as related to this tradition of memory.

To what extent does the tradition of Renaissance memory systems enter into the thought of Vico's *New Science* (1730/1744)? To what extent is this sense of memory created anew in the thought of Hegel's early writings and his Jena period? Isaiah Berlin has shown in *Vico and Herder* that Johann Gottfried Herder rediscovered the principles of Vico's thought.⁷ Did Hegel do something similar in his attempt to create a concrete universal (*Begriff*) in his early thought? These questions about Vico and Hegel point to the general question of whether philosophical systems, those that are concerned with total conceptions of human consciousness, are not in essence theaters of memory, presented in a manner more abstract than that of Camillo. Are not all philosophies that claim that the true is the whole vast structures of memory, and not simply works of reason? Are these philosophies a kind of theater that brings the individual's powers of memory and imagination into play in order to achieve access to the rational comprehension of the world?

Giulio Camillo's Theater of Memory

Rossi says: "The term *clavis universalis* was used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to designate a method or general science which would enable man to see beyond the veil of phenomenal appearances, or the 'shadows of ideas,' and grasp the ideal and essential structure of reality. Deciphering the alphabet of the world; reading the signs imprinted by the divine mind in the book of nature; discovering the correspondence between the original forms of the universe and the structures of human thought; constructing a perfect language capable of eliminating all equivocations and putting us in direct contact with things and essences rather than signs; the construction of total encyclopaedias and ordered classifications which would be the true 'mirrors' of cosmic harmony. . . ."⁸

This search for a general or universal key, by which to read the divine book of the world, is behind Leibniz's attempt to develop a universal language, or *characteristica*. The production of a general key by which we can learn to read the nature of the real is part of Camillo's theater of memory. Leibniz's characters were to be a calculus, to be used in various logical combinations to solve all problems and to create an encyclopaedia of all arts and sciences. Camillo's theater was an arrangement of images (*pittura*) based on an occult art of memory, a secret way of meditating in the human mind the design of the divine mind. Leibniz, working in the earlier tradition of Lullism, takes the art of memory in the direction of conceptual thought. Camillo does not separate the art of memory from the image. As Joaquin Barceló has pointed out, in Leibniz's ideal of the *characteristica universalis* we lose the rhetorical sense of language necessary to the connection of philosophy and wisdom.⁹ The image is sacrificed to the logical concept.

Camillo's work is unique. Were it not for the pioneering efforts of Rossi and the extended discussion and diagrammatic reconstruction of the theater itself in the work of Yates, we would have lost all traces of the philosophical insights of Camillo. Camillo's small major work, *L'Idea del Teatro*, which he dictated on seven mornings before his death in Milan in 1544, was published in Florence in 1550. It describes his theater, which was an actual wooden structure large enough to be entered, built in Italy.¹⁰ A version of it was built in France. The "divine Camillo," as he was called by contemporaries, said he would reveal the secret of the theater only to the King of France, and, although Camillo received support from the French king, toward the end of his life he accepted the offer of a pension from the Marchese del Vasto in Milan, in return for being taught the secret of the theater. My view is that the secret was revealed only by the writing of Camillo's little book, which just describes the theater itself, its specific furnishings, its *pittura*. In addition to the images there were writings in drawers or coffers—texts of speeches based on Cicero, relating to the images.

The theater was a structure rising in seven grades, divided into seven gangways, each gangway marked on the first grade by one of the seven planets. The theater is based on the conception of the seven pillars of Solomon's house of wisdom. As one proceeded up each gangway one encountered on each level a gate decorated with images of pagan mythology. On the first grade were gates with the names of the Sephiroth (the ten hypostatized attributes or emanations in Cabalistic thought by means of which the infinite enters into connection with the finite) and the angels (Gabriel, Michael, and so forth), placed in correspondence to the seven planets.¹¹ The second grade is the appearance of simple elements; the third is the mixture of elements; the fourth is the creation of man's *mens* in God's image; the fifth, symbolized by the union of Pasiphaë and the bull, is the union of soul and body;¹² the sixth is the natural activities of man, those activities that can be performed without any special art; and the seventh is the Prometheus grade, which includes all arts and sciences, as well as religion and law.

If we look at the structure of the theater in philosophical terms, we can see that it expresses the relationships among the natural, human, and divine. What I have said above gives only a hint of all the possible directions of thought and combinations of images present in the theater. On the seventh grade we encounter Prometheus as founder of the arts and sciences. We might have expected to encounter Memory herself (Mnemosyne), the mother of the Muses who are the arts of humanity. Camillo introduces the Prometheus grade by saying that it contains the arts both noble and vile: "il settimo Grado è assegnato à tutte le arti così nobili come vili."¹³ My view is that the mother of the Muses does not appear because hers is the divine and wholly noble art—and that the whole theater is governed by Memory, who teaches us the singing of the Muses.

Since the Muses sing both truly and falsely, as Hesiod says, we must be careful and learn this divine art too, not the art of simply singing truly, but the power of singing both truly and falsely as life requires. This is a noble art because it is wisdom itself to know what singing is required. Knowledge, unlike wisdom is a form of Creticism, an inverted Creticism. The rational, scientific knower is the reverse of the Cretan: the scientific philosopher must always tell the truth. Condemned always to tell the truth or attempt to tell it, the rational philosopher is cut off from the art of the Muses that comes from memory. He has no sense of the divine art of singing truly or falsely as life requires.

Yates says: "It is because he believes in the divinity of man that the divine Camillo makes his stupendous claim of being able to remember the universe by looking down upon it from above, from first causes, as though he were God. In this atmosphere, the relationship between man, the microcosm, and the world, the macrocosm, takes on a new significance. The microcosm can fully understand and fully remember the macrocosm, can hold it within his divine *mens* or

memory.”¹⁴ To grasp the sense in which Camillo’s theater is a theater of memory, we must recall the tradition of memory systems that originates with Simonides and his discovery that he could recall the names of the guests who had died in the collapse of a banquet hall by associating them with the places at which they had been seated.

In the classical art of memory or *artificial memory* the orator employs places as means to remember the points in his speech. He impresses on his memory the images of various rooms or spaces and associates the topics of his oration with them. By moving from place to place in his mind he moves from point to point in his speech. Physical architecture is the basis of mental architecture. There is an art of inner writing that can be brought forth in outer speech. Physical place gives mental place. Camillo’s Renaissance theater takes the classical art of artificial memory one step farther. The classical art of memory is based on the weakness of memory. Camillo’s art of memory is based on the divinity of the human *mens*. Camillo transforms the art of memory as the means for making speeches into the means for discovering the real. The art of memory becomes the art of metaphysics.

The human *mens* must be put into contact with its own origin, which is the divine *mens*. There is a sense in which the metaphysical art grows from the weakness, not the strength of the mind. Metaphysics is necessary because we are separated from the divine. Vico expresses this view in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* when he claims he has formulated a metaphysics commensurate to the weakness of human thought.¹⁵ The mind must pass back across the divide that separates it from its own origin. In the theater the mind finds writ large what is writ small in its own nature. The large writing of the theater is a smaller writing than the real words of the world itself. The relationship between divine place and human place is an indeterminate one, closed to logic and open to the image. The essence of the image is to hold together indeterminately. Metaphysics must be an art of images or else it will remain a strictly human art.

Yates points out that the proportion of the images themselves may have been important to the effectiveness of the theater. In the interpretation I am suggesting here, the proportion of the images is crucial—in fact, it is everything. The architecture of the image, each image, and the system of images that is the theater must be precise or it will not function. If it is the language of the world—its real words, its inner writing—it is like a mother tongue. When one hears a thought in another language its meaning is never fully transparent. There is always a shadow. The meaning is always signified. Only with our mother tongue can we arrive immediately at the meaning. Camillo’s theater is the mother tongue of metaphysics. It is a favorite view of conceptual thought that images are imprecise. This is a self-serving, false notion of ratiocination. A poem or a myth is the most precise form of thought in human experience. In rational thought

only one sense of precision is necessary, that of intellectual connection. In what is poetical all must be a whole—sound, words, connection of meaning, feeling.

Not everyone knows the power of the image and its secrets. In the opening sentence of *L'Idée del Teatro* Camillo says: "The most ancient and wisest writers have always had the habit of entrusting to their writings the secrets of God under obscure veils, so that they are not understood except by those (as Christ says) who have ears to hear, namely, who by God are chosen to grasp his most sacred mysteries."¹⁶

In Camillo's theater the spectator entered on the stage, and found the roles of actor and spectator reversed as he faced the gates and grades of his audience—the *pittura*. There is a principle of reversal here that reminds me of Hegel's principle of the inversion of consciousness of the *verkehrte Welt*, the topsy-turvy world, especially if Hegel's metaphor is considered in connection with Ludwig Tieck's play of 1799, *Die verkehrte Welt*.¹⁷ The reversal of roles is crucial to the theater. But there is no secret to the theater that Camillo has not revealed. He has told us as much as he ever told the Marchese del Vasto. The secret lies in the sense of proportion. Proportion activates the soul. Unproportioned souls are lopsided, hanging to the side of true songs; they cannot sing with the Muses, both truly and falsely. These souls deal with the signified, and cannot speak the mother tongue of memory.

Vico's *New Science* as Theater of Memory

The basis of Vico's *New Science*, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is his "imaginative universal" (*universale fantastico*), which he says is the "master key" of his science.¹⁸ The basic structure of his science is contained in his list of 114 elements or axioms. On the basis of his *verum-factum* principle in the *Ancient Wisdom*—that the true is the made—Vico distinguishes between *scienza* and *coscienza*, between science, in which the true is made, and the "witnessing consciousness," which can assert truths about the object that it is unable to make. Science, as we normally think of it, that is, natural science or any social science that is primarily observational and inductive, is actually *coscienza* and not *scienza*. Its truths do not result from its power to make the object it knows. The only science that is a *scienza* is metaphysics. For example, Vico uses the phrase: "così questa Nuova Scienza, o sia la metafisica."¹⁹

Vico also speaks, and speaks somewhat mysteriously, since he mentions it only in passing, of a common mental language or a mental dictionary, a *lingua mentale comune*, a *vocabolario* or *dizionario mentale*.²⁰ This is an idea connected to Vico's special notion of a "common sense" of mankind, a *sensus communis*. Vico says that common sense (*il senso comune*) is the presence of judgment without

reflection (*riflessione*) that is shared by an entire class, a people, a nation, or the human race.²¹ The thought-form of this *sensus communis*, which Vico uses in the same sense as does Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (a sense that is both epistemic and communally social), is Vico's common mental language or dictionary. This common vocabulary was accessible to the first human beings through their power to form "sensory topics," *topica sensibile*.²² The first human beings thought with their senses and created commonplaces from which they could bring forth knowledge of the world. This original knowledge is not knowledge but poetic wisdom, *sapienza poetica*. It is not a product of reflection. It is in fact an art of memory or recollection. Vico says that the first men, like children, had strong memories. The human mind begins in this topical activity of the senses, and each nation must realize its mother tongue as a particular version of this common mental language. Every language is a memory system for recalling this language of commonplaces, which is the unwritten and unspoken language beneath any language.

What can be the role of Vico's axioms in a science that is based on topics rather than reflective judgment? Taking Camillo's theater as a key, I suggest that Vico's axioms are memory aids. Like Camillo's images they make the real transparent. Vico's axioms take the mind to history and allow us to recall the divine structure in it so that it becomes ideal eternal history—*storia ideale eterna*. Our understanding of nations becomes as transparent as our power over our own tongue. Vico's axioms bear no resemblance to the axioms of geometry or the axioms of rationalist metaphysics, such as those in Spinoza's *Ethics*. Vico says his axioms are to circulate like blood. The axioms are not a rational set; they fall loosely into groups and express principles of widely varying generality. Most are presented directly through some piece of philological subject matter.

Vico's axioms are reminders of things that we, as philosophers educated in the Western tradition, already know, or vaguely know, about the world of nations. They are rhetorical maxims, not logical principles. We enter into them as we enter onto the stage of Camillo's theater. Each axiom must be mastered, as must each image on the gates and grades of Camillo's theater. We must meditate on them until they become an inner writing in which we can read the events of the life of any nation in terms of its divine pattern, its life in the *corso* and *ricorso* of ideal eternal history. Each axiom is a key that can unlock the divine structure of an event. We glimpse the commonplace, the *topos*, from which the event is evoking itself.

Vico's axioms suffer a flaw, even though a heroic flaw. They are abstract places. They are not simply master images of the common mental language. In this sense they are not real thoughts. They are not the real words of the world. They signify the real words of the common mental language. They are conceptually formed images and are not themselves the language of poetic wisdom. But

they cannot be otherwise. In Vico's view philosophy comes on the scene only when poetic wisdom has faltered and is fading. The existence of philosophy in the life of a nation is a first sign of the onset of what Vico calls the barbarism of reflection—*la barbarie della riflessione*.²³ When philosophy appears, poetry has not long to live.

Philosophy heralds the barbarism of the intellect that thinks in terms of the intelligible universal (*universale intelligibile*) or concept.²⁴ The concept grows in power in the third and final age of humans, in which thought loses touch with the gods and the heroes of the first two of Vico's three ages of ideal eternal history. The rhetorical power of the word is lost, the sense of the word that erupts in speech and produces the metaphorical basis of thought. In Vico's terms, we lose the power to make manifest the common mental language. When the power of the word in this sense is lost, the gods are lost: metaphysics becomes rational. Poetic metaphysics dies with the death of poetry.

Vichian philosophy is a heroic act to breach reflective judgment and recall the gods. It is an attempt to remember the poetic in the only way it can be remembered—as the intelligibly poetic. The quest for intelligibility is barbarism. In philosophy it leads to the quest for system and to the notion that all philosophies of the whole are systems. Vico's new science is unsystematic metaphysics because all that he teaches us is a way of speaking about the world wherein we can remember the world. As he says, his is an art of narration in which the whole can appear as the flower of wisdom.

Thought cannot actually make the world as true as it can in the life of poetic wisdom. Philosophy can remake the world only in memory. It can bring the origin into the present, but in doing so it is driven—by the very age of which it is a part—to make the origin intelligible. Metaphysics can practice the art of the singing of the Muses. It can sing of what was, is, and will be. But unlike the Muses its singing must be intelligible. The urge to have the conceptual meaning present in the imagistic is real; it is due to the age in which philosophy necessarily appears. This makes the songs barbaric, because philosophy cannot produce the origin in its songs; philosophy can only attempt to understand it. But in this way memory can oppose logic, imagination can oppose abstraction, and ingenuity can oppose method. The problem is to sing false songs, and that is very difficult. Vico's false song is that his work appears to be a system. This might be concluded from the fact that he says that all nations follow the same course.

Hegel's Memory (*Erinnerung*)

By discussing Vico in connection with Hegel I do not wish to continue the tradition of understanding Vico as a precursor of Hegelian philosophy; I wish to do

the opposite. The extent to which Hegel can be placed in the memory tradition requires a radical change in the way in which he is traditionally regarded.²⁵ I am concerned here with only the early Hegel, in particular the Jena period and the generation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

In the final paragraph of the *Phenomenology* Hegel suddenly introduces the notion of *Erinnerung* or recollection as the way to comprehend the task of the *Phenomenology* as a whole.²⁶ He employs the term four separate times to explain four moments of his total conception. We are led into this final paragraph by summary remarks on spirit as nature, which is a form of forgetting, of wandering with strange companions. It saves itself from these companions, the objects of nature, by remembering that it has another life—a life of self-images. It recalls that it has another life, free of the mindlessness of natural science, that is capable of *Bildung*. At the first moment recollection produces history as nightmare, but in the second moment the fact that recollection is itself a systematic power is realized. Recollection is not merely the entertainment of the image but the internalizing of it. Thus Hegel hyphenates his term as *Er-Innerung*. *Erinnerung* is a process of *Innerung*, of inwardizing the image. This inwardizing is the basis of *Bildung*, the self-educating process of spirit.

The third moment is the assertion that this power of recollection to inwardize is what gives access to absolute knowing, *absolutes Wissen*. It brings forth the actual appearance through which absolute knowing can be reached. The fourth moment is the realization that recollection, in both its power to call forth images and in its power to *know* them, to organize them into a totality, is conceptualized history, *begriffene Geschichte*. Hegel claims further that this appearance of the concept (*Begriff*) as recollection is the Calvary of absolute spirit. Spirit is brought by recollection to the place of the skull, the Golgotha, the place of crucifixion. I think Hegel means this image in a completely visual sense. What seemed to be the face, the living presence of mind or spirit, suddenly becomes the calvarium—the skull, lacking the lower jaw and facial portion. Here once again the image shows us what it is not: the concept as the element of the divine in the image has not attained its proper life.

Hegel not only explains the process whereby spirit reaches absolute knowing as recollection, he also employs the form of memory and imagination—the image—as the means whereby the reader can be initiated into and remember the *Phenomenology*. Hegel calls the *Phenomenology* a *Galerie von Bildern*, a gallery of images.²⁷ It is through the *Bild* that we recall Hegel's work. Hegelians often focus on the owl of Minerva metaphor of the *Philosophy of Right*; it is the totem image of Hegelism. The *Phenomenology* organizes its contents around a series of images—the *verkehrte Welt* or topsy-turvy world, the master and servant, the unhappy consciousness, the phrenologic skull, the law of the heart, the *geistige Tierreich* or spiritual animal kingdom,

the beautiful soul. For anyone who has read Hegel, mere reference to these brings him or her back into the text.

In his lecture manuscript for the *Realphilosophie* of 1805–1806, part of the *Jenaer Systementwürfe*, Hegel says: “Recollection adds the moment of being for itself—I have already once seen it, or heard; I recollect; I see, hear, not merely the object, but go thereby within me—recollect myself, I withdraw myself from the mere image [that is, the perceptual image], and place myself in myself; I place myself especially to the object.” Hegel further says that from what is internally remembered is born the name: “Through the name the object as individual being is born out of the I. This is the first creative power, that spirit exerts; Adam gave all things a name, this is the sovereign prerogative and first taking possession of the whole of nature or the creation of this out of spirit; *logos*, reason, essence of the thing and speech, fact and fable, category. Man speaks to the thing as his . . . and this is the being of the object. . . . The world, nature is no more a realm of images, inwardly transformed, that have no being, but a realm of names. That realm of images is the dreaming spirit, that has to do with a content, that [has] no reality, no existence—its awakening is the realm of names; here separation is at the same time, the dreaming spirit is as consciousness; only now its images have truth. . . .”²⁸ The *Bild* becomes *Begriff* in the quest for truth and we as philosophical thinkers must retake, recollect this route in order to understand the philosophical meaning of the *Begriff*, to grasp it as the medium of the whole.

In an unpublished manuscript from Hegel’s Jena period, discovered in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, to which Karl Rosenkranz makes reference, Hegel makes perhaps his richest remarks on memory and its relation to myth and art, in relation to what Vico would call poetic wisdom and the position of the artist when this wisdom disappears.²⁹ Hegel says:

Mnemosyne, or the absolute Muse, art, assumes the aspect of presenting the externally perceivable, seeable, and hearable forms of spirit. This Muse is the generally expressed consciousness of a people. The work of art of mythology propagates itself in living tradition. As peoples grow in the liberation of their consciousness, so the mythological work of art continuously grows and clarifies and matures.

This work of art is a general possession, the work of everyone. Each generation hands it down embellished to the one that follows; each works further toward the liberation of absolute consciousness.

Those who are called geniuses have acquired some special skill or other whereby they make the general forms of a people their work, just as others do other things. What such geniuses produce is not their invention, but the invention of a whole people, or the *finding* that a people has found its essence.³⁰ What belongs to the artist as such is his formal activity, his particular skill in this kind of presentation, and he is

brought up to this in the general skill. He is like someone who finds himself among workers who are building a stone arch, the scaffolding of which is invisibly present as an idea. Each puts on a stone. The artist does the same. It happens to him by chance to be the last; in that he places the last stone, the arch carries itself. By placing the last stone, the artist sees that the whole is one arch; he declares this to be so and thereupon is taken to be the inventor. Or, as in the case of workers who are digging for a spring, he to whom it falls to take up the last layer of earth has the same work as the others. And to him the spring bursts forth.

It is the same with a revolution in a state. We can think of a people as buried under the earth, above which there is a lake. Each intends to be working only for himself and the preservation of the whole by removing a piece of stone from above and employing it in the general subterranean construction. The tension in the air, the general elements begin to change; it produces a desire for water. Uneasy, the people do not know what it is they are lacking and to help they dig even higher in the belief of improving their subterranean condition. The crust becomes transparent. One person catches sight of it and calls: "Water!" Tears the last layer away and the lake rushes in and drowns them all by giving them drink.

So is the work of art the work of all. There is always one who brings it to its final completion by being the last to work on it and he is the darling of Mnemosyne.

When in our time the living world does not form the work of art within it, the artist must place his imagination in a past world; he must dream a world, but the character of dreaming, of not being alive, of the past, is plainly stamped on his work.

Gadamer has said that when we have questions about Hegel, we can almost always find them answered if we go to the text and look.³¹ I have tried simply to let the texts speak. These passages strike a hundred chords. If they suggest that Hegel's system has a rhetorical dimension and that the basis of his system in the *Phenomenology* is a recollective act, I have accomplished my purpose.

Conclusion

I have asked whether the unknown, magnificent theater of memory of Camillo does not provide us with a clue to how Vico's and Hegel's philosophies give us examples of this true speech. I do not mean that there is direct historical influence among these figures, but that they stand together in a general movement of thought. Through this I have tried to make evident the fact that systematic lan-

guage continuously employs the less evident rhetorical language of topical images.

My point has been that this true speech of the *archai* plays upon memory in the sense that it brings forth the topics or places that reside in what Vico calls the *lingua mentale comune*. This is a language of the imagination, of *fantasia*, imaginative universals—*universali fantastici*. The movement from Camillo to Vico to Hegel constitutes a kind of ideal eternal history of this. Camillo's theater is a direct language of images, a metaphysics of images. His images function as transparencies of the language of God for those who can read them. Vico's theater is the heroic philosophy of the image in which we are taught the science of recollective *fantasia* or imaginative memory—the art of philosophical narration of the true, a making of the true that does not collapse into the logical language of the concept.

Hegel's true speech leads directly to the purely human speech of the *Begriff*, to concrete conceptual speech. We have access to the *Begriff* in Hegel's system only through the speech of the *Bild* or *bildhaftes Denken*, which lives in memory. But the *Begriff* is ultimately intended by Hegel as separable from the true speech of images. It is intended to be itself a true concrete speech of reason. In this way Hegel's thought is pointed toward the purely human interest in intelligibility, toward a concrete version of Vico's intelligible universal. The divine speech ultimately becomes lost and confused in his giant system of reason. Hegel becomes a *gigante* of the barbarism of the intellect. This is not Hegel's fault; it is the fault of the disappearance of the poetic in history and the human age of self-contained intelligibility.

If I may use the last words I have quoted above from Hegel, with a change: "When in our time the living world does not form the work of philosophy within it, the philosopher must place his imagination in a past world; he must dream a world, but the character of dreaming, of not being alive, of the past, is plainly stamped on his work." And so philosophy finds itself in this position.

CHAPTER 8

Culture, Categories, and the Imagination

Culture

Cassirer suggests that below language there are two forms of the gesture—the indicative sign and the imitative sign.¹ Meaning can be achieved through the bodily act, by means either of pointing to or imitating in physical movement the object meant. The indicative act of simple pointing is repetitive; the same act is used again and again to achieve meaning. It is the single act of the pointing finger. It remains the same regardless of the object indicated. The imitative or mimetic sign is achieved by taking up into the body the schema of the object meant. Moving water is meant by the flowing motion of the hands, sleep by folding the hands next to the head. In imitation the body becomes the significance of the object. The object's meaning is captured in the medium of the body. The meanings of the world are not referred to or cited. The world is acted out within the reality of the body.

There are two powers of the word that function at the origin of culture—the metaphorical power and the logical power.² The metaphor is mimetic. Its power is that of the myth. Through the metaphor the names of the gods are achieved. The world comes alive as the activity of the gods. The power of the word to name the gods and to divine the signs of their action in nature is the power of the image. Culture is taken from nature by the power of the image to imitate, to place in its own medium the natural as a drama of opposites. The second power of the word is its function in logical classification. Here the drama of the opposites of nature is not narrated. Opposites are fixed as genus, species, and individual. Nature is not transformed, as in the myth. Nature is cited as a repository of objects, as a system of genera and species achieved by the logical power of the word to express single essential features of the perceived object. This logical

power of the word is mental pointing. It is the repetitive use of the genus and species to organize the world, to make it a point of reference.

The power of imagination and the power of logical judgment are separated at the beginning of culture. The rise of modern thought since Descartes and Locke has placed its faith in the logical judgment. Behind each type of logical judgment lies its ground in a category, as Kant has shown. Locke's interest in the idea and Descartes' interest in the clear and distinct idea lead us away from the image and toward the concept. There is no narration of the logical concept; the concept tells no story of the world as a drama of opposites. It stares at the world through the clear idea. The world comes forth as a system of single understandings, single causes and realities. The attachment to the clear idea becomes, in the contemporary world, an attachment to the success of procedure, of the technique as the basis of human action. At the basis of contemporary culture is technological consciousness and action. We now live in a world that Descartes, with his interest in the clear and distinct idea and his four-step method of truth, could approach only in thought.³ We live inside Descartes' mind.

The entire tradition of Western philosophical thought can be viewed as a project of reason—at least it has frequently been so viewed. But there are gaps. Reason is continually faced with a difference between itself and the concreteness of the world as sensed and lived. Reason as taken up by philosophers always has an outer surface, a beyond. There is always something surrounding reason. When reason is philosophical it sees itself as a project, it tends to establish this project in terms of an exclusive disjunct. The thinker is asked to think in terms of two alternatives: to become attached either to the rational, to what in some sense can be articulated from within experience, or to what is beyond, to the irrational or mystical. Philosophy is always struggling with these possibilities, and skepticism always awaits the outcome, awaits its chance to be the resolution of this struggle. This exclusive disjunct is reflected in the work of such divergent thinkers as, for example, Bertrand Russell, in the title of his early collection of essays on *Mysticism and Logic*,⁴ and Hegel, in his contrast of the truth of speculative reason with mysticism in his *Encyclopedia Logic*.⁵

Not to found philosophy on reason is not to philosophize. It seems as simple as that. For those who do not wish to take reason to its limits, there are other things to do. One can practice faith, cultivate the vision of mystics, or seek the "suchness" of the *Prajñā-Pāramitā*. For me the problem is not with reason over and against the irrational, the problem lies with what touches up against reason from the very beginning of its philosophical form—the image. The image challenges reason on two fronts—in respect to the ability of the concept to articulate life and in respect to the ability of reason to deal with the beyond, the outer limits of the whole. The image provides form both for what is directly sensed and for what is forever beyond. Reason struggles with what the image easily accom-

plishes because the image is in the region of the directly sensed. Reason is always forming the object at a distance. To mediate is reason's life and it must struggle with the immediacy so easily at the command of the image.

The problem that philosophy has with itself—that it inherits from its own birth in Socratic Platonism—is the place of the image. I think the image suffers two fates from the very beginning of philosophy. One of these fates is that the image is ushered into the world of the concept and becomes its servant. In this case its status is exactly what Jean-Paul Sartre states in his study of the imagination: “The image may be just as surely a thing as is the thing of which it is the image; but, by the very fact of being an image, it has a sort of metaphysical inferiority relative to the thing which it represents.”⁶ The other fate of the image is that reason simply assigns it a realm of freedom and as such it is then made a separate object of reason's study. In this manner the image is allowed to go its own way, as art and as poetry, which become items for reason's reflection in the fields of aesthetics and the philosophy of art. These two fates of the image are responsible for what may be called *the two imaginations*.⁷

My remarks divide into two parts: first, some reflections on categories in which I try to show them as an activity of the single-mindedness of reason; second, the advocacy of a philosophy of imagination, in which the question is raised of the universalizing powers of the imagination and the benefits of a philosophizing motivated by the image rather than the concept. My guide in the second part of these remarks will be Vico. My hope is that he may guide me through the regions of the rational categorical beasts—the *leone*, the lion of Aristotle's *Categories*, the *lupa*, the she-wolf of Kant's *Analytic*, and the *lonza*, the leopard of Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of Mind*—and that in so doing the *diletto monte*, the Mount of Joy of the *universale fantastico*, the imaginative universal, may emerge, however dimly, at least as a promise.

Categories

Kant says, in a letter to Marcus Herz (February 21, 1772): “I tried to reduce transcendental philosophy, namely all the concepts of completely pure reason, to a certain number of categories, but not in the way *Aristotle* did it. He placed them in his ten predicaments next to each other, merely approximately, as he found them. On the contrary, I tried to make the reduction in accordance with the way in which, by means of a few fundamental laws of the understanding, they divide themselves into classes.”⁸ When I think of categories I think first of Aristotle and then of Kant, then I think of Hegel, and of Peirce, who had a special interest in them. From there I think perhaps of Whitehead, whose categorical scheme, in addition to a category of the ultimate, contains eight categories of

existence, twenty-seven categories of explanation, and nine categoreal obligations.⁹ I think of Ryle's notion of "category mistake" and of Russell's theory of types. Further, there is Willard van Orman Quine's defense in *Word and Object* of the relativity of categories to language, and P. F. Strawson's observation of the "philosophical phenomenon of category-preference."¹⁰

Ryle, in an early paper on "Categories" presented to the Aristotelian Society, says: "We are in the dark about the nature of philosophical problems and methods if we are in the dark about types or categories."¹¹ I think Ryle's observation is correct, that he is right that categories occupy, and perhaps must occupy, a central place in traditional philosophical reasoning. Ryle's doctrine of categories in the *Concept of Mind* leads him to this belief in the "primacy of the intellect." This belief in the intellect causes him to understand the imagination in terms of "mental pictures," as an activity of "make-believe." In an odd and instructive passage he says: "Intellectual work has a cultural primacy, since it is the work of those who have received and can give higher education, education, namely, by didactic discourse. It is what constitutes, or is a *sine qua non* of, culture. To put it crudely, barbarians and infants do not do intellectual work, since, if they did, we should describe them instead as at least part-civilised and near to school age. . . . Lectures cannot be followed, much less delivered, by persons who cannot yet use or follow artless talk."¹² What interests me here is Ryle's narrowness. His interest in equating civilization with the innate grace of the concept is instructive. This view is not simply Ryle's; it has a connection with the notion of categories itself and, further, with the notion of reason as the one means to human or philosophical thinking.

I hope I may here be allowed a small digression, because I think the challenge to Ryle's "primacy of the intellect" is to be found in François Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. There Ryle's English reverence for the "artless talk" of the intellect meets a master at penetrating the profundities of academic debate. I am thinking of "How Panurge put to a Non-plus the Englishman, that argued by Signes." Panurge, wearing for the occasion an enormous codpiece with a multicolored tuft of silk on the end, with an orange placed inside, debates with Thaumast, the Englishman, completely through bodily signs, before a lecture hall full of highly trained academics. Here the subtleties of arguments, conceptual distinctions, and categories are replaced by unfathomable movements.

Problems and solutions are posed and offered in this fashion: "Thaumast began to puffe up his two cheeks like a player on a bagpipe, and blew as if he had been to puffe up a pigs bladder. Whereupon Panurge put one finger of his left hand in his nockandrow, and with his mouth sucked in the air, in such a manner as when one eats oysters in the shell, or when we sup up our broth; this done, he opened his mouth somewhat, and stuck his right hand flat upon it, making therewith a great and a deep sound . . . and this he did for sixteen times. But

Thaumast did always keep blowing like a goose.”¹³ They continue these maneuvers for some time. Reading this, one is refreshed and can look at Ryle’s primacy of the intellect with new eyes. Further, one wonders if Rabelais and not Peirce is the founder of the theory of signs, and Panurge and Pantagruel the first semioticians.

Ryle’s reverence for “artless talk” that is inaccessible to children and barbarians is reminiscent of Descartes’ instructions on the mature speech of the intellect, in which the skillfully arranged and clear thought can replace the youthful reliance on history, rhetoric, and fable.¹⁴ Although Ryle sees Descartes’ conception of mind as the fundamental example of his theory of “category mistake,” of the “Ghost in the Machine,” he does not go beyond Descartes’ conception of the form of truth. Civilization for Ryle, as for Descartes and Voltaire, is a matter of identifying the proper epistemological or social state of *lumière*. Against this I shall try to indicate later how Vico advances a notion of human speech, history, and culture based on philosophical narration and the image rather than the concept, the argument, and the category. I wish to suggest that categories constitute a part of the mind opposite to the imagination.

I return now to the two primary thinkers on categories—Aristotle and Kant. Aristotle’s categories are reflections on language, based on the notion of substance and accident. But by this I do not mean that Aristotle reflected directly on the parts of speech, as he had no such list of parts from which to work. The categories are the highest genera of entities. It is important to Aristotle’s conception that substances be distinguished from accidents and essential predication from accidental predication. The category of substance has a special role in that an entity must be determinable through the category of substance in order that it can be the subject term in accidental predication. There are no accidental predications of accidents. If Aristotle undertook the formulation of categories in response to problems concerning predication that troubled the Megarians and other early thinkers, as W. D. Ross claims, then they became more than a solution to a particular problem, since they recur in various ways throughout his thought.¹⁵

The difference between Kant’s and Aristotle’s treatment of categories, as Kant himself claims in the letter to Herz, quoted above, is that Kant attempted to formulate his set of categories in terms of the laws of the understanding. Aristotle begins with uncombined expressions but Kant begins with judgments. Thus, from the ways that judgments are classified in logic, specifically from sections 301 through 305 of Georg Friedrich Meier’s abridgment of his logic or *Vernunftlehre*, Kant constructs the general basis for his twelve categories.¹⁶ Kant’s categories also differ from Aristotle’s in that for Kant generic terms are empirical concepts whereas categories are purely formal. In Aristotle’s conception, categories, as highest generic terms, are properly employed when they are applied to

substances. In Kant's conception categories apply to appearances and any appearance can be judged in terms of any category. Historically, Aristotle's list of ten categories has exerted an enormous influence on Western thought from Porphyry's commentary forward, even though Aristotle himself was not closely tied to the list of ten. Kant's list of twelve as a specific list has had few followers. The strength of Kant's influence rests on his notion of how categories are formed and their relation to the knower, which has exerted a fundamental influence from Hegel to C. I. Lewis's *Mind and the World Order*, and so on.

The category presents us with something unequivocal in a world of uncertainty. It offers single-mindedness and one-dimensionality. Reason is reassured in the category of its ability to perform an ultimate act of conceptual reduction. This act of reduction can be on experience or on reality itself, depending on what the particular practitioner of reason wishes to claim for the categories. Even the categories of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, which have behind them the schema of movement of the stages of consciousness of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, are singles; they are essences and are simply of themselves, without compound. I think that, in fact, Hegel does as much with the category as anyone can do.

By transforming *Verstand* into *Vernunft*, Hegel hopes and, moreover, claims to have a system that is concrete and which conquers the beyond of the *Ding-an-sich*. Hegel was a genius of reason; he did as much with the Western tradition of philosophical reason as probably can be done. But Hegel is the end of something, and not the beginning. In the wake of Hegel all becomes method in philosophy. There are as many schools of contemporary philosophy as there are methods. Methods have often reacted to each other, as in the reaction by linguistic analysis to logical positivism in the early 1950s; or they have undergone metamorphoses, such as the emergence of phenomenology from the chrysalis of existentialism among American thinkers. Avenues of friendly relationship have been discovered, such as the rapprochements between ordinary language analysis and phenomenology of the 1960s.¹⁷ It is also possible, after Hegel, to reject method on behalf of life and existence, on behalf of what is inaccessible to reason. A philosophy of the beyond, or the absurd, or the unexpected is possible after the Hegelian watershed of *Vernunft*.

What the Hegelian project leaves out to a large extent is the imagination. In Hegel's concept of *Geist* the imagination becomes art and art becomes the presentation of spirit in its immediacy. Sartre's point of the "metaphysical inferiority" of the image holds for the Hegelian metaphysics. But before leaving Hegel I want to say that the imaginative nature of the *Phenomenology* cannot be overlooked. The hundreds of jokes, images, and tropes contained in it give the book its life and are at many points all that keep the transitions of spirit going.

The traditional interest in the category must ultimately face the imagination. Perhaps a way for it to begin to do so is for it to face certain versions of it-

self. For example, it must come to grips with what Michel Foucault brings to our attention at the opening of *Les Mots et les Choses*, his study of order. Foucault quotes a passage from Jorge Luis Borges which quotes “a ‘certain Chinese encyclopaedia’ in which it is written that ‘animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.’”¹⁸ Foucault speaks of the laughter that shattered the familiar landmarks of his thought and of the seeming “stark impossibility of thinking *that*.” He says he laughed for a long time.

I think Foucault’s point is even more fundamental than, for example, Benjamin Whorf’s point, which he tries principally to demonstrate with American Indian languages: that different languages offer different spaces, times, and causalities.¹⁹ Foucault wishes to show that different orders are different places, different *topoi* in which an age or a culture exists. He is suggesting that place has primacy over time, and in this he understands something Hegel never did. For Foucault, a time or process in which all human events are connected is not primary for our understanding of them; he is interested in how the strata of one order can be seen against another. Between strata we hear only distant murmurings in history. Foucault, however, still sees things in terms of the concept. The categories of Borges are still seen as categories of thought. Foucault’s archaeology does not fully reach out to the image as an alternative to the category as such, even to the kind of classification of Borges’ “certain Chinese encyclopaedia.”

Imagination

The imagination is the forgotten problem. Even more, as W. B. Yeats says: “We have driven the living imagination out of the world.”²⁰ And, as Samuel Johnson says: “Imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint, has always endeavored to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the inclosures of regularity.”²¹ This faculty is licentious, vagrant, and baffling to the logician for perhaps many reasons, but at least one of them is that the imagination is without categories. It neither produces them nor is subject to them. Kant understood and attempted to face this problem, I think, when he wrote the *Critique of Judgment*.

In the third *Critique* Kant explores the dimensions of the “reflective power of judgment” (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) which, unlike the “determinant power of judgment” (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*) of the Understanding (*Verstand*), does

not attain synthesis through the category. In his interest in such judgments, I think, Kant comes close to a viable concept of imaginative thought. But this is a special problem for Kantian scholarship and it cannot be accomplished here. Let me at least say that Kant understood that there is a kind of order that is not based on the category but is nonetheless a universalizing form of order. Organic form and aesthetic form are genuine types of form in experience but they do not employ categories. They are ways of universalizing the particular. A work of art is one of a kind, but it carries a universal meaning.

Two books on the imagination of particular philosophical interest are Mary Warnock's *Imagination* and Edward Casey's *Imagining*. Warnock is very much in the tradition of British Empiricism. The thesis of her study is to understand the imagination as "that which creates mental images" and her intention is to trace the imagination from its presence in ordinary perceptual experience to "our most outlandish interpretations."²² In many respects her approach is reminiscent of that of E. J. Furlong, in a work also in the British tradition. Furlong's account is typical of the British fashion of treating the imagination through homely examples. Like Ryle before him, he approaches the imagination in terms of wondering what I do when I play, pretend, mimic, dream, and so on.²³ What might be called the "British view" is that imagination is always to be thought of as in some sense making pictures in your head, with "head" often understood in behavioral terms. Warnock's account goes beyond this by having a concern to reform educational policy in relation to imagination.

Casey wishes to demonstrate by descriptive phenomenological means that the imagination is an "autonomous mental act."²⁴ Casey's interest and perception of the problem is much closer than Warnock's to my own. Casey's study is built on a deep sense of awareness of the way in which the imagination has been written out of Western philosophical thought, which has striven for imageless thinking. Whereas Casey wishes to pursue this problem in terms of phenomenological investigation, I wish to pursue it in terms of Vico's notion of the "imaginative universal."²⁵

The most fundamental work on the imagination to date is certainly Eva Brann's *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance*. In it the reader will find a survey joined with valuable insights into all the fundamental literary and philosophical sources for views of the imagination, including Vico's.²⁶

Karl-Otto Apel, in his study on language and humanism, calls Vico the owl of Minerva of Italian Renaissance culture.²⁷ Vico recovers a mode of understanding that is forgotten and lost in the founding of modern theory of knowledge and metaphysics in the work of Descartes and in the founding of modern philosophy of history in Voltaire's *Essay on the Manners and Customs of Nations* (1757).²⁸ Vico's *New Science concerning the Common Nature of Nations* (1730/1744) is a recovery in the interest in rhetorical discourse and imagination found in the work

of Renaissance figures such as Francesco Petrarca, Leon Battista Alberti, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, and Lorenzo Valla.²⁹ In his study of the Renaissance Ernst Cassirer points out that, in Leonardo da Vinci's doctrine of art and science as "second creations" of nature: "Reasons and imagination no longer confront each other as strangers; for each is simply a different manifestation of the same basic power in man, the power to give form."³⁰ Cassirer, however, does not understand the centrality of the problem of rhetoric for the origins of Vico's thought, even though he regards Vico as the "discoverer of the myth" and the first philosopher of the foundations of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.³¹

Vico's work is bounded historically on the other side by Romantics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Goethe, who both knew something of Vico but whose conceptions of imagination must be most directly understood as responses to Kant. There are similarities between Coleridge's notion of imagination as "esemplastic power" in his *Biographia Literaria* and Vico's notion of *fantasia*, even though Coleridge read Vico nearly ten years after he finished this work. Coleridge's conception of the "primary imagination" as the repetition in the finite mind of the "eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM"³² has a similarity to Vico's conception of the convertibility of the true and the made, of *verum* and *factum*, that is accomplished first by providence and then enacted by humans in their creation of particular cultural worlds.

On his visit to Naples in March 1787 Goethe first learned of Vico's *Scienza nuova*, a copy of which he said the Italians "presented to me as a sacred treasure."³³ Vico could agree with what Goethe says about truth—in a rather odd place—in his remarks on meteorology (*Witterungslehre*), written some years later: "The true, identical with the divine, can never be known by us directly, we behold it only in reflected splendor, in example, symbol, in single and related phenomena; we become aware of it as incomprehensible life, and still cannot renounce the wish to comprehend it."³⁴

Vico says that the *New Science* cost him twenty years of his mature life, during which time he lived as nearly a stranger in his own land, which was dominated by the intellectual climate of Cartesianism and by the Inquisition. The reader need only open the *New Science* to see that it is a unique work. There are discussions of giants, idolatry, divination and sacrifices, monsters, origins of hieroglyphics, medals, money, natural law, poetic physics, children, heroic customs, Roman assemblies, the coming of Aeneas to Italy, the search for the true Homer, duels and reprisals, kinds of authority, barbaric history, and many other topics. One feels invited to a feast—but a banquet of such elaborate proportions that on approaching the elegant and groaning tables one feels uncertain of the order of courses for its consumption. Yet one somehow knows it was not intended for the guests to fall to and feed on everything at once.

Vico's *New Science* is a speech, a discourse. His aim is not to argue points or to persuade in an ordinary fashion but to devise a mental place from which we can gain access to the fundamentals of human culture, to what he calls the "nations." Vico is reacting to the natural-law theories of Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and John Selden, which attempt to understand human society without sufficient grasp of its origins or genesis. Vico intends to avoid what he calls the "conceit of nations" (*boria delle nazioni*) and the "conceit of scholars" (*boria de' dotti*).³⁵ These *borie*, these conceits or arrogances, are to think that one's customs go back to the beginning of time or that what one knows is as old as the world. Against such conceits Vico sets his notion of the "imaginative universal," the idea that he says is the "master key" to his new science.³⁶ I believe that these conceits apply to categories and the mentality of categories. Vico, however, does not present a discussion of the problem of categories. I do not wish here to replace these arrogances with a *boria* of the imagination; I wish only to do what I can to help philosophy loosen itself from the pact it has made with rational science.

THE IMAGINATIVE UNIVERSAL

The imaginative universal is the notion of an original, primal mode of thought. It is the notion of regarding sensibility, feeling, or expression as a form of thought. The first proto-human beings, or giants, Vico says, thought with their bodies. They could make no distinction between themselves and their bodies or between the idea of an object and its body.³⁷ This is the level of *fantasia*. Both *fantasia* and *immaginazione* are translated by the English word "imagination." Vico does not use *fantasia* in the sense of the English notion of fantasy or in the sense of imagination, which tends to connote the extravagant and often delusional use of the senses. The earliest uses of the English term "imagination" by Geoffrey Chaucer and others reflect its connection with conceptions of unreality. In 1535 Miles Coverdale writes: "Thou has herde their despytefull wordes (O Lorde) yee and all their ymaginacions agaynst me."³⁸

Imagination in English is strongly tied to the free creation of mental images, to the entertainment of something not present to the senses or not yet in existence. Vico's use of *fantasia* does not have this negative orientation attached to it. It is closer to the English meaning of imagination as creative power. *Fantasia* is the natural word to use in connection with poetry; poets possess *fantasia*. Unlike *immaginazione*, *fantasia* is not simply picturing something to oneself as though one could see it; it is the creation or bringing into being of something. In Vico's conception it involves constructive and visionary power, which has also

an element of cultural memory. *Fantasia* might best be called the *making imagination*.

Vico's conception of *fantasia* and the imaginative universal raises a new issue in theory of knowledge. The problem of knowledge is traditionally conceived to begin with a given, with something present before the mind, whether it be a perceived quality, vivid impression, sense datum, phenomenon, and so forth. Vico does not understand the problem of knowledge in this way. He is concerned to go inside the moment of the given, to descend into it—a descent Vico says we can barely make, if make at all.³⁹ The question Vico asks is how anything at all can be given for the mind. His view does not begin with something before the mind to know or to intend, but with how there is anything present for the mind in the senses at all.

For Vico, the original generative act of mind is bound up with the image. By the image here I mean the imaginative universal. A doctrine of the image is necessary in order to overcome the conceit or arrogance of scholars because at the center of such conceit is the concept. The mentality of the concept offers itself as a means to truth without any understanding of its own genesis. The fundamental imaginative universal for Vico is Jove.⁴⁰ Vico says that every people has its Jove, but Jove goes by different original names.⁴¹ Jove is born in human consciousness from the ability of consciousness to give form to fear, fear caused by the thunderous sky. Jove is the first name and it is the name of thunder. Like the contemporary mythologist Mircea Eliade, Vico claims sky mythology to be fundamental.⁴² The first name is the name of the whole, yet in the naming of the whole a distinction is achieved between the whole and the locus of thunder. Fearfulness has a specific form. The as-yet-to-be self-conscious subject and the as-yet-to-be fully particularized object of thunder appear as a felt identity in the awesome body of Jove. Jove is the sky. The thunder is a generalized action of the body of Jove. In the separation of earth and sky the world can occur. The reaction of fear is also a generalized action of the body of the knower, who is at this point just fear.

With the bodily actions that form the image of Jove the human spirit for the first time has before it a given. This given is a universal achieved by the power of *fantasia*. With this power the mind achieves what Vico calls *sapientia poetica*, poetic wisdom. This is not achieved by ratiocination or the thought of the concept in any form. This act is not proto-rational. The *concept* does not make its appearance as Jove; it is the *image* that first makes its appearance as Jove. Implicit here is the primacy of metaphor over analogy. It is through the power of the metaphor that we have anything before the mind at all. The metaphor operates through identity, not similarity. Jove is not *like* thunder, nor is he *like* fear. An identity is formed among Jove, thunder, and fear, but this is not an identity of

elements that can function as givens to be then identified in the poetic character of Jove.

Jove is the appearance of *is* itself. It is the appearance of being as the copula which is both the assertion of existence and the assertion of relation simultaneously accomplished in consciousness. Identity here is not simple unity. Once the mind is in possession of identity as a power of consciousness—an identity active as sky, thunder, fear, and Jove—the basis of the names, the images of all other gods are within its grasp.

In this view of mind and culture there is no distinction between the two imaginations. There is not an imagination of the mental image of the senses and one of free creative activity. The imaginative universal is not the representation of something. The “metaphysical inferiority” about which Sartre speaks, which the image has traditionally had, is not possible, because the image does not represent a given. It is the given. Since this original given is achieved by *fantasia* acting as creative power it incorporates in it the traditional sense of imagination ascribed to poetry or art. But here the image is not an extension of reality. It is not novelty, in the sense of creating something new from a present reality that could not be expected on the basis of what is given in that reality. It is the making of reality itself. Reality is not being extended or newly viewed or remade. Reality is itself being made. The fundamental work of *fantasia* is the active formation of reality.

I wish now to take a very large step and move from a consideration of *fantasia* as the power which creates world and culture to *fantasia* as the basis for philosophical understanding, as a basis for conducting the business of philosophy that runs counter to the mentality of rational categories. This second-order sense of *fantasia* might be termed “recollective *fantasia*.” Between Vico’s primary *fantasia* and this *fantasia* of *fantasia* lies all of Vico’s *New Science*, all of the complex motions of *fantasia* in its actual production of society, history, and thought. If Vico is to offer a new version of the philosophical enterprise he must do so, finally, in terms of making the image and the power of the image the central point of philosophy. He must make *fantasia* itself the medium of philosophical understanding. Vico’s answer to the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry cannot be a new version of the divided line, that is, if the line is viewed as a representation of developing states of mind moving from *eikasia* to *nous*. It must be based upon a new understanding of philosophical form.

To do this Vico requires a new version of philosophical praxis. It was necessary for Vico to commandeer the name of science from science itself, to steal the club of Hercules, as it were. This act depends upon his distinction between the true (*verum*) and the made (*factum*) and their convertibility, which he proposes in his early work, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*.⁴³ Vico maintains that we can know truly only what the knower has made. When we are the pro-

ducers of the object we can be the true knowers of it. When we are not the makers we can have only a kind of consciousness of the object. For Vico natural science has only an external knowledge of its object. Such objects are not made by the knower.

God as creator of nature commands a true knowledge of objects, since he is their maker. He can, in fact, perfectly convert *verum* and *factum*. Humans can have a true science of the human world, but not of the natural world. Within the human world a *scienza*, rather than *coscienza*, a mere history of particulars, is possible because humans make the human world. The human both knows the world of spirit and culture and makes it, and knows it because he makes it. The activity of such knowing is the god-like activity of humans narrating to themselves the principles of the human world. The *scienza* of Vico's *Scienza nuova* is a science of narration. "History," Vico says, "cannot be more certain than when he who creates the things also narrates them [chi fa le cose esso stesso le narra]."⁴⁴ Vichian science is not the science of argument, evidence, or the category. It is instead the science of narration. It is narration by necessary principles, principles found and activated by *fantasia* moving on a recollective level. Just as the primary imaginative universals are the true stories of being, so Vichian science is the true narration of the eternal principles of that which humans make.

But upon what does a science of narration depend? Vico claims that imagination is a part of memory. Vico claims that memory has three different aspects: "memory when it remembers things, imagination when it alters or imitates them, and invention when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship. For these reasons the theological poets called Memory the mother of the Muses."⁴⁵ Thus *fantasia*, *memoria*, and *ingegno* are the powers of Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses, her nine daughters who govern the arts of civilization. Philosophy as recollection, the practice of the art of Mnemosyne, is the narration of the eternal pattern of human events, or what Vico calls the "ideal eternal history," the *storia ideale eterna*.⁴⁶ This kind of recollection can never be transformed into the single-mindedness of the category.

At the basis of Vico's science are principles which are universals of the recollective imagination. Vico calls them axioms, but they are inexpressible and unthinkable apart from their philological bodies. Vico's axioms are actually *memory aids*.⁴⁷ They allow us to remember, to place things in their proper arrangement—the patterns of the ideal eternal history. Vico invites us to develop philosophical memories. Categorical thought has no place for the memory and the narrative. The category invites us to create ultimate singles, unequivocal grounds for thought and being. Memory and imagination can treat opposition as composed of dramatic forces, the principles of which can be captured in narration. The categorical mentality, the logical mentality, is shameless in its reductionism. The category actually robs us of our memory and of any actual sense of

drama or time or place. Philosophical reasoning based solely in the category would drive the living imagination out of the world.

Conclusion

What I have tried to express is a vision of things. Visions are more difficult to communicate than are arguments, evidences, or concepts. The habit of the imageless ideal of thought runs deep in the philosophical mind. Counter to this, I have tried to recall some other voices, moving what scenery I could against my two theses: the provinciality of the philosophical reason of the category, that invents the doctrine of the two imaginations, and the cosmopolitanism of the image, which holds to the science of the narrative and the imaginative universal, that upholds poetic over logic and hopes for the reemergence of the theater of memory. If I have succeeded in calling attention to the false god of the category, the Babel of the culture of the category, my aim in these remarks is fulfilled.

CHAPTER 9

Metaphysical Narration, Science, and Symbolic Form

Science as Symbolic Form

I wish to address two questions: first, is the search for scientific truth a self-sufficient activity? Or, second, does scientific right reasoning depend upon a form of truth-telling that lies beyond the limits of scientific investigation? Put differently, is there a sense of metaphysics as a form of human culture that is the embodiment of this general sense of truth-telling?

The answers to these questions involve the relationship of science, philosophy, and metaphysics. As a means for answering them I wish first to examine Cassirer's conception of science as a symbolic form. Then I wish to join this conception with Vico's conception of metaphysical narration. Cassirer understands science, like culture, as arising from the distinctively human power to form the world through symbols. Scientific truth depends upon a particular use of this power of symbolic formation that exists within that system of symbolic forms we call culture.

Vico understands the civil world, or culture itself, to arise from a special sense of imagination that forms universals within its narrations. Within these narrations are stated the primordial truths of human culture upon which science is later to depend. My aim is to put Cassirer's conception of science together with Vico's conception of metaphysical narration. It is a long-standing point that scientific thinking involves metaphysical presuppositions. My interest is not in the interconnection of science and metaphysics as a traditional logic or epistemological question, but in their interconnections as cultural activities. I wish to approach this through Vico's original association of metaphysical knowledge with the basic human act of narrating a truth.

Cassirer's notion of the symbol is a transformation of the Kantian notion of the schema, that is, the notion of a *sensuous-intellectual form* that lies at the basis

of knowledge. Kant reaches this notion of a schema through a process of making distinctions within his transcendental analysis of the elements of experience. Cassirer wishes to find this schema in experience as a *phenomenon*. He does so in his discovery of the symbol as the medium through which all knowledge and culture occur. Cassirer understands his philosophy as an idealism that he, in fact, traces back to the problem of form in Plato, but he insists that the object of which he speaks is truly *there*. It is not a creation of the mind of the knower. This is a point on which he insisted in a lecture presented to the Warburg Institute in 1936, "Critical Idealism as a Philosophy of Culture," and later to his students at Yale in the 1940s.¹ The notion of the perceptual object as something *there* being pregnant at the same time with something that is *not there* Cassirer connects to Leibniz's term *praegnans futuri*, as well as to the psychology of perception.

In his full phenomenology of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*), which Cassirer claims derives most directly from Hegel rather than from Kant or Edmund Husserl, he distinguishes three basic functions of consciousness.² These functions might be thought of as basic ways in which sensory content is symbolically pregnant for the knowing consciousness. The expressive function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*) does not separate knower and known. It forms the object mimetically. It is the object felt and portrayed as a benign or malignant force. Culturally this function is developed in the symbolic form of myth. The representational function (*Darstellungsfunktion*) enacts a separation of knower and known. It is typified by the analogical power to *liken* things into groups, to develop a referential relation between knower and known and attain a logic of classification of objects. Cassirer sees this referential relation as tied to the powers of language, of logos as separated from mythos. This is the power of language to organize the world as a system of discrete objects.

The significative function (*Bedeutungsfunktion*) is the power of the knower freely to construct symbol systems, through which the known can be ordered, and which themselves can become elements in wider systems of symbols. This is dominated by what Cassirer calls the purely symbolic. This function has its shape in the symbol systems of modern logic, in mathematics, and in the theoretical structures of modern science. Here the thought of the knower constructs worlds of pure meaning that have their own coherence of form, and which in the modeling, empirical, and experimental activities of science find loci in experience and provide consciousness with a formal articulation of what is there.

Cassirer claims that "the symbolic process is like a single stream of life and thought which flows through consciousness, and which, by this flowing movement produces diversity and cohesion, the richness, the continuity, and constancy, of consciousness."³ Thus in metaphysical terms Cassirer regards the symbol as that which bridges the gap between life (*Leben*) and thought, or—as he often uses as the opposite of *Leben*—spirit or *Geist*.⁴ To exist as a human is to be

at the juncture of life as it is formed or as it flows into one of the various directions of the mind or spirit. In his essay of the early 1920s, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form im Aufbau der Geisteswissenschaften," Cassirer gives perhaps his most fundamental definition of symbolic form: "Under a 'symbolic form' each energy of spirit should be understood through which a spiritual meaning or content is joined to a concrete sensory sign and is inwardly adapted to this sign."⁵ Each *Energie des Geistes* is an act in which consciousness internalizes the sensory content in a certain way such that this content can ultimately be formed as an object of knowledge.

Every symbolic form is at once a way of knowing the object and a way of the subject defining itself in relation to the object. These acts of consciousness do not just designate forms of knowledge. These forms of knowledge correspond to fundamental forms or directions of man's cultural activity. Thus myth as well as science, although polar opposites, are on Cassirer's view both forms of knowledge. Myth does not differ from science as a form of knowledge because myth and science employ different categories as a means to delimit the object. They have the same categories (which they also share with every other symbolic form) but they differ in the interpretation and employment of these categories. This leads to what Cassirer calls a difference in "tonality" (*Tönung*) among the symbolic forms.⁶ Mythical thought and scientific thought both employ the category of cause, but what counts as a causal relation in myth differs radically from what counts as such in science. Each symbolic form has its own "inner form," and it is this *innere Form* that the philosophy of symbolic forms seeks to bring out.⁷ Each form of culture is to be understood on its own terms, as having its own inner logic through which consciousness acts and in which knower is related to known.

In one sense Cassirer's conception of the symbol derives from the essay, "Das Symbol" (1887), by the Hegelian aesthetician Friedrich Theodor Vischer and from Heinrich Hertz's view of the symbolic character of knowledge in the introduction to *Die Prinzipien der Mechanik* (1884).⁸ But even more than this, I think, Cassirer's notion of the symbol is directly derived from what caught his imagination in his first book of systematic thought, *Substance and Function* (1910).⁹ In the first chapter Cassirer advances a conception of the logic of modern science based upon the generalized notion of a mathematical function. Although he presents this as a conception of the logic of science that will provide a theory of concept formation that will actually fit with the workings of modern science, what he offers is a statement in purely formal terms of the interrelationship between universal and particular that is the inner form of the symbolic form itself.

Aristotelian class logic has failed to offer an adequate theory of the concept for the way in which modern science works, because its universal is based upon

a process of abstraction from the particular such that the universal loses its power to make specific determinations of the particular. Cassirer shows how, in the notion of a function, the principle by which a series is ordered can never be a member of the series it orders, yet it has the power to determine the next member of the series. Thus $F(a, b, c, \dots)$ provides a model of the interconnection of the universal (F) and the series of particulars (a, b, c, \dots).¹⁰ The bond that exists within the two logical levels of this sense of serial ordering is exactly what Cassirer later attributes to the notion of the symbol, which is at once something sensory and also the bearer of a meaning.

Cassirer can speak of science, as he does in *An Essay on Man*, as “the highest and most characteristic attainment of culture,” because in science these two levels of the symbolic process are fully articulated and self-consciously developed.¹¹ In science, for Cassirer, thought or spirit truly becomes a function of itself. It can develop itself according to the basic power and principles of its own nature. The primordial bond between sense and significance that is achieved on the level of symbolic pregnance now becomes its own dynamic as *Erkenntnis*, scientific or theoretical knowing. What Hegel would attribute to the full activity of philosophical knowing, Cassirer attributes to the broad activity of modern science. In science so understood, consciousness becomes the conscious and deliberate owner of the symbol, the owner of the power to construct the world in symbols. The knower becomes the owner of the object. The spirit that Galileo articulates in *Il saggiatore* (*The Assayer*), that the language of nature is written in mathematical symbols, seems completely fulfilled.¹²

The other symbolic forms, although they too form the object, do not form the symbol. In myth or art or language, the knower’s access to the world is attained through the particular symbolic process of the particular form, but that symbolic process is never fully commanded by the knower. In such symbolic forms the nature of the symbol is never fully articulated or penetrated. The process of symbolic formation always in some sense guides the knower in apprehension of the object. In myth and art, unlike in science, the knower never guides the symbol with the freedom of making systems of symbols that arise directly out of the power of the symbol. In science, thought creates systems of order that are fully and formally determinate and which can generate further systems. In science, thought seems truly to own itself and the world at once, because it owns the symbol in the way that no other form of knowledge or cultural activity does.

What emerges from Cassirer’s conception of science as symbolic form is that science is the master of the symbol. Science becomes the true possessor of the symbol, which is the power upon which all knowledge, as well as culture, depends. The other forms of culture, such as myth, religion, art, history, and, in a sense, language—that have been grouped together as the *Geisteswissenschaften*—

are symbolic forms; but in them the knower is, in various ways, dominated by the symbol. The knower is dependent on the symbol. In such forms the knower is always attempting to attain knowledge of his own being, in contrast to knowledge of the object. These forms are always energies of the spirit toward self-knowledge. As Cassirer explains in the first chapter of *An Essay on Man*, one or the other of these symbolic forms, at various times and periods, becomes dominant as the basis for man's knowledge of himself. In the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the symbol is always something through which man is attempting to find himself, to find his own nature. The symbol is permanently problematic for the symbolic forms of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.¹³

When the symbol emerges as science, when it takes on the inner form of what we know as science, a change takes place between the knower and the symbol. Science, as Cassirer emphasizes, initially passes through a mythic stage and later through what he calls a linguistic stage—a stage of descriptive and classificatory thought. Even particular sciences progress through such stages in their own unique developments on Cassirer's view. But once science has emerged, once the purely significative function of consciousness has emerged, the knower takes a new and unprecedented command of the symbol, of the very process through which knowledge and culture are made. In what are traditionally designated as the *Naturwissenschaften*, the problem of self-knowledge is put aside. Science arises through the knower's shifting all attention to the formation of the object. This is true even of the behavioral sciences, which treat the self as an object for investigation and which have nothing to do with the problem of self-knowledge in the above sense.

With its attention on the known, on the object side of the knower-known relationship, science seems to transcend culture. Whereas we can and must speak of myth, art, religion, or language as imbedded in various actual cultures—and thus we speak of Chinese mythology, Greek religion, African art, American history, or the Indo-European languages—we can speak of science in no such terms. There is no such thing, in the proper sense, as Russian science, German science, or American science, unless we are speaking descriptively of the particular forms of social institutions that underlie the scientific community and vary according to historical group. Lysenkoist science or Nazi science are contradictions in terms because they were politics masquerading as science. True science is universal and is the same throughout all cultures. When science is done properly it is done in the same way, regardless of place. Although there is a symbolic form of art or myth that is articulated when the inner form of art or myth is articulated apart from its existence in particular cultures or periods, this unity is different from that of science as described above. Science is different because it appears to bring with it its own unity, to command its own standpoint apart from whatever culture in which its activity is actually taking place. Science appears this way because

it seems to command the symbolic process itself and to be a form of thought solely of the object.

The “Science” of Metaphysical Narration

Cassirer wishes to conceive science as symbolic form in order to include it in culture. He wishes to show that it is one form of knowledge among many, all of which together comprise a system of symbolic forms that defines the limits and nature of human culture. There is an unresolved tension within the system of symbolic forms because science seems to own the symbolic itself. In scientific thought the mind freely constructs orders of symbols out of other orders of symbols. The resolution of this tension, I think, is not possible within Cassirer’s system. I wish to turn to the philosophy of Vico in an effort to discover how it is possible to have an adequate philosophy of science as symbolic form.

There can be no science of culture in the sense of science as described above. The power of science is to form the object or the knower as object. There is no science of the knower as knower. Another way to put this is that there can be no science of self-knowledge in the ancient Socratic sense. The most that can be attempted in this direction is to deny the meaning of any such knowledge, as B. F. Skinner has done in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.¹⁴ There is no meaningful way to turn scientific knowing back upon the humanities, upon humanistic knowing, and offer a knowledge of them. But the reverse is not true. There is no scientific knowledge of science itself, but there is a humanistic knowledge of science. That is, there is a humanistic knowledge of what science is and how such knowledge is part of human culture.

My thesis, with its roots in Vico, is that culture is where the self encounters itself, and that at the heart of culture is self-knowledge. It is my view that the essence of humanistic thought, of the humanities themselves, is narration. I count philosophy as one of the humanities. To follow Vico, philosophy is that part of the narrative approach to experience that constitutes the essence of humane letters—that attempts to make humanistic knowledge into a special kind of science.

Vico’s *New Science*, his “principles of new science concerning the common nature of nations,” is a science of culture; but what Vico means by *science* must differ from what has above been discussed as science.¹⁵ Vico is commonly called the founder of the philosophy of history. Cassirer adds to this appellation; throughout his works Cassirer refers to Vico as the founder of the philosophy of the *Geisteswissenschaften* as well as the founder of the philosophy of mythology.¹⁶ In *The Problem of Knowledge* Cassirer calls Vico the “true discoverer of the myth” (*der eigentliche Entdecker des Mythos*).¹⁷ The one truly original part of Cassirer’s

philosophy, and a feature that sets him off from all other major thinkers of the twentieth century, is his grounding of his theory of knowledge in a theory of myth. Directly at the base of this Cassirer places Vico. In his view, Vico is also the first to understand the way to conceive the humanities generally as forms of knowledge, the issue that occupied not only Cassirer but also Wilhelm Dilthey and influenced the development of hermeneutics down to Gadamer and beyond.¹⁸ What Cassirer misses in Vico is Vico's conception of narration and the conception of the relationship between rhetoric and metaphysical knowledge, upon which all of Vico's *New Science* rests.

It is not possible here to recreate the rich and complicated features of Vico's total thought. I wish only to employ Vico's views in an effort to suggest how the limits of science are to be understood. This can be accomplished, I think, first by attention to Vico's complaint against Polybius, a complaint that he reiterates in various places. He makes it prominently in axiom 31 of the *New Science*, where he says: "from this point begins the refutation of the false dictum of Polybius that if there were philosophers in the world there would be no need of religions. For without religions no commonwealths can be born, and if there were no commonwealths in the world there would be no philosophers in it."¹⁹

Vico's reference is to *The Histories*, where Polybius holds the view that the cohesion of the Roman state was due to the institution of religious superstition in public and private life.²⁰ Polybius believes that although this was successful, it might not have been necessary if it were possible to have had a state composed of wise men. The term *philosopher* here is not intended in the narrow sense of someone schooled in philosophy as a particular discipline but more in the sense of the *sapiens*, the knower. Vico's point is that a society of thinkers or cognizers is an impossibility. A society of reasoners who are held together by their processes of evaluating arguments and good reasons for acting or not acting in certain ways (a dream held in high regard by all sorts of modern ethicists and cognitive scientists) is not meaningful or desirable.

Another way to put this is that a body of persons sharing the rational pursuit of truth, common conducting of experiments and investigations, and so forth, is not a culture. Such activity presupposes culture in order to occur; it is in no way at the heart of culture itself. Vico speaks of the conceit or arrogance of scholars "who will have it that what they know is as old as the world."²¹ It is this conceit that is natural to science's seeming possession of the symbolic process itself. Science is modest about how much it knows of the nature of things, but its propensity is toward immodesty about the method of right reasoning that will lead to truth. Science appears as a kind of independence from all else but its own aims, as that form of thinking toward which thought and culture have always been tending and in which much of the hope of the world of nations is to be placed. All of this is well known. It is the old division between scientific truth

and values, with the emphasis placed on the need to discover some way to understand value so as to allow, if not for a science of values, then for the discovery of some method for proper thinking in values. The problem on this level is misconstrued; what is required is not a new conception of values but a re-conception of the ancient project of self-knowledge. To pursue self-knowledge requires a notion of knowing that is more fundamental than that of scientific thinking, and one that allows science to be kept in perspective.

Vico claims that there are three principles of his science which are also the principles upon which all nations are founded and which they hold in common. These are three human customs: religion, marriage, and burial.²² Religion, which Polybius would attempt to exclude, is the first of these. By religion Vico means those primordial orderings of the world upon which any society is founded, or what we would today call myth. Man lives in a mythical world before he lives in a logical, empirical, or scientific world. The first human beings, for Vico, live in an age of gods—that is, the first human beings organize their world in terms of gods; for them all things are full of gods. They first name the thunderous sky Jove, and once in possession of the first act of naming they name all things in the world as gods: the sea, the earth, flora and fauna, and so forth. The first power of language is that of the metaphor and the fable or myth.

In Vico's view, humans originally make their world through their power of *fantasia* (imagination). *Fantasia* is communal. It is responsible for the myths or fables made in common by any nation in its beginnings. It expresses the fundamental images upon which any nation is built. *Fantasia*, not ratiocination, is the primordial faculty from which all human institutions spring. Vico's notion of *fantasia* and the sense of universals (*universali fantastici*) that it makes has close ties with Cassirer's conception of *Ausdruck* (expression).²³ *Fantasia* is the faculty by means of which we give form to the world as felt. It is a thought of the passions. In Vico's picture the giants roaming the great forests of the earth experience thunder and lightning. They experience fear of this (*spavento*) for the first time. They form this feeling of the thunderous sky as Jove, who is a kind of giant of a different order than they, and whose body is the sky itself. Jove is an *Urphänomen* in terms of which all their particularized sensations of the sky can be organized.

Jove is an imaginative universal, a kind of universal formed through the power of imagination, not through intellectualization. The fable or the myth is based in this power of the imaginative universal. A myth is always a true story, and it is a true story because a myth always states an *archē*. The myth is what is first, and is that from which all else must be drawn and developed. By its very nature it states a first truth. There could never be a society of intellectual knowers because what intellectual truths they formulate and seek could never derive directly from the world itself. Their intellectual truths always are implicitly

framed by and traceable back to those original meanings first formed in *fantasia* that are embodied in what Vico calls religion.

Fantasia for Vico is above all a faculty of making. It is certainly tied to the ancient conception of *poiein* (meaning both to make, and to compose poetry), upon which Plato plays in the tenth book of the *Republic*, and what is preserved in the Latin *poeta*. The first wisdom of humanity was poetic, or what Vico calls *sapienza poetica*, and because this power of poetic making is concerned with the actions of the gods in the world, Vico often speaks of the first thoughts of humanity as those of the "theological poets." Because human society is first of all made by humans it is possible in Vico's terms to have a true *science* of the principles of humanity. The most famous lines of Vico's *New Science* make this point: "But in the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind."²⁴

The anthropologist Edmund Leach has analyzed the similarities between this famous claim of Vico and Lévi-Strauss's conception of the role of myths in the origins of humanity. He concludes that Lévi-Strauss's conception of his "science of mythology" is very close to Vico's. Leach says, "thus, in effect, Lévi-Strauss, like Vico, affirms that 'the principles of the world of civil society are to be found within the modifications of our own human mind.'"²⁵ Among various statements of Lévi-Strauss's position, Leach finds the following to be closest to the point of Vico's claim. Lévi-Strauss says: "thus there is simultaneous production of myths themselves, by the mind that generates them and, by the myths, of an image of the world which is already inherent in the structure of the mind."²⁶

Leach also reminds us of Lévi-Strauss's principle concerning the communal and archaic nature of myths, which expresses a very Vichian point, namely, that human beings do not think themselves through myths but myths think themselves through human beings without their knowing it. Vico, like Lévi-Strauss, holds that the "first science to be learned should be mythology."²⁷ This is a point which Cassirer, in his own way, holds in his grounding of modern theory of knowledge in theory of mythical thought. Vico's conception of a science of mythology is quite modern. As Leach puts it, "In this discussion [that is, Vico's conception of imaginative universals as the logic of myth] Vico is really concerned with the same basic problem that repeatedly confronts the anthropologist when he meets with totemic phenomena. What is really meant when the Bororo Indians say that they are red parrots, the Dinka say that they are lions, or the Nuer say that human twins are birds?"²⁸

Myth is the heart of all humanistic knowledge for Vico. The myth is the master key to how all human institutions and systems of thought are originally

made. A sense of the myth and of the *made* holds the key to a science of human culture. This is a science which *science* as we normally understand it cannot provide, and which this *science* presupposes. Vico makes clear what he means by science in his early work *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* (1710).²⁹ There he formulates his famous principle that “the true is the made,” or that “the true is convertible with the made” (“verum esse ipsum factum,” or “verum et factum convertuntur”). Vico finds the principle of the convertibility of *verum* and *factum* illustrated in mathematics. What is true in mathematics is true because we make it. He makes a distinction between science (*scientia*) and consciousness (*conscientia*); the latter might best be rendered as *witnessing consciousness*, thus preserving something of its meaning as both consciousness and conscience.

Natural science is not *scientia* but *conscientia*, because the object in nature that is the object of natural science is not made by the activity of natural science. Its truths are not made by the methods of investigation of natural science but are more properly found by it in nature. Science then, in this view becomes a special kind of witnessing of nature—of that of which the knower is not the cause. God stands to nature as converter of true and made. But the natural scientist is in principle external to and not the maker of the object of his investigation. The role of experiment, Vico holds, is so important in natural science because it simulates the conversion of true and made. In the experiment we seem almost to be the maker of the object understood. Man stands to mathematics as God to His creation. Later, in the *New Science*, Vico expands his conception of *scientia* to the world of civil things (*cose civili*) or human culture. Here a science is truly possible because the objects of our investigation “have certainly been made by men,” and thus men can make a knowledge of the principles inherent in these cultural institutions. Man stands to culture as maker to made.

What is the form of thought that will yield this science of culture that is more properly a science than is any science of nature? Vico is quite clear on this. It is a narrative science. Nothing else will do. In his presentation of method in the first book of the *New Science*, Vico makes it very clear that the decisive proof of his science depends upon the reader meditating and narrating to himself the “ideal eternal history traversed in time by the history of every nation in its rise, development, maturity, and fall.”³⁰ The new science is above all a metaphysics based in the human power of narrative truth-telling.

The details of human culture must be meditated, that is, they must be brought into the mind and digested, inwardized, and otherwise fully absorbed. These details (what Vico calls philology—the languages, deeds, laws, and customs of a people) must then be made into a narrative truth. This means, for Vico, that these details must be ordered so as to make a necessity, so that we have a knowledge *per causas*. The new science is based in an act of cultural memory. This act of cultural memory must take the form of a narration in which events

remembered are ordered in a pattern of necessity, of causes. In Vico's terms this is a science that reveals "what providence has wrought in history."³¹

Ultimately, Vico's ideal eternal history is a science based in poetic and in rhetoric. It is based in poetic because its narration is like a myth. Like a myth it claims, first, to relate a true story, and, second, to relate a complete story. It purports to be true and complete. Such narration is rhetorical because it is, above all, a speech. It must be eloquent, not in the sense that it is finely spoken or charming but in the ancient sense of eloquence as the complete speech, the saying of all that can be said on a subject. We may add, in this case, that what the Vichian scientist has conceived in his mind is the whole of culture, the whole world of civil things.

Conclusion

Vico has his own way of making this speech, the details and adequacy of which I have examined elsewhere.³² My concern is only to have arrived at the idea of such a speech itself, and to have suggested how it is connected to the idea of narration. Science as we ordinarily know it (what Vico calls *consentia*) can have nothing to do with this sense of a science of narration because, as Cassirer shows, science associates truth only with the object and, as we may now add, with the part. Scientific truth is always a search for the achievement of right reasoning about the nature of some part of what there is. The object of science is never the whole. There can be no science of the whole in this sense. A way that this can be immediately seen was mentioned earlier—science never is of the knower as such; there is no science of self-knowledge.

Another way I can put my point is in rhetorical terms. Science, as we ordinarily understand it as a specific activity that takes place within culture (a symbolic form), is essentially *ratio*. This is to say that it depends ultimately upon the drive of the mind to seek satisfaction in the list, the method, the ordering up of what is before the mind. *Ratio* has close connections with the abstractive power of language as logos. But over and against *ratio* is *narratio*.³³ Narration is the drive of the mind toward satisfaction in the telling of something, that is, in the recreating of the thing in words, the representing of the genesis of the thing in question. This is connected to the metaphorical power of language, to mythos. *Ratio* is by nature an order of parts. *Narratio* is by nature a whole; a story is complete—beginning, middle, and end. A story fully told needs nothing further to be said, but it may, of course, be told again.

In having said this, I do not mean that narrative is not present within scientific thought. Narratives are certainly employed in scientific thought, for instance, in pathology, general medicine, life sciences, geology, cosmology, and so

forth. Narrative thinking is no doubt important to every field of science at some points, even to the so-called exact or mathematical sciences. In this respect scientific thought is itself deeply indebted to the primordial activity of the myth, the activity in which we first learn what a story is. My larger point is that science does not transcend culture; rather, science *presupposes* culture. We know what culture is only if we are able to make a narrative knowledge of the whole of it. This is tied to the pursuit of self-knowledge of the knower, which can never be reached by *ratio*. The order achieved by *ratio* can be elegant. It can be elegant in the sense that logicians speak of the elegance of a set of propositions or of a proof, or in the sense that a scientific theory can be ascribed elegance. But only *narratio* can be eloquent, that is, only in relation to *narratio* can the complete speech be the aim. The “crisis of man’s knowledge of himself,” of which Cassirer speaks in the first chapter of *An Essay on Man*, cannot be solved by any elegant set of understandings, by any reflective theories. It can be solved only by eloquence, by a form of thought that Vico, in accord with the Renaissance Humanists, called “wisdom speaking”—*la sapienza che parla*. *Sapientia* understood as wisdom is always a grasp of the whole of things, and *eloquentia* is the presentation of this grasp in speech.

Finally, what is the role of narrative in science? I have tried to suggest that science naturally resists narration—at least, science conceived as symbolic form—because of its interest in the object and its separation from the role of the symbol in self-knowledge (the knower’s interest in the knower). Science falls most naturally to *ratio* rather than *narratio*. My point is that whatever the precise role narration takes in science and in particular sciences or particular phases of their investigations, narration is a rhetorical form not generated by science. Narration itself must come from that sense of humanistic thinking that takes culture as both human wisdom and the project of man’s self-knowledge, writ large. The origin of culture itself is the act of narrative knowing—the myth. At the point of humanistic or philosophic thought is again the narrative—as the natural form in which to grasp culture as a whole. Because narration exists as myth and as the form in which culture can be known, narration is available to scientific thinking—to play a role in its purposes.³⁴

CHAPTER 10

Myth and Metaphysics

Mythic Imagination

F. H. Bradley begins his *Appearance and Reality* with the claim that “Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct.”¹ Instinct in its original Latin form of *instinctus* has the sense of instigated, incited, impelled. Those primary, non-individualized impulses, that allow us as human beings to be in the world, determine our beliefs in what the world is.

I think Bradley is correct, but I do not think that the dialectic between instinct and speculative reason captured in his statement fully characterizes the nature of metaphysics. I wish to suggest that there is a middle term in this opposition—the mythic imagination. In the development of human culture, myth precedes metaphysics. Our impulse to grasp the order of things is manifested first in myth. Later what is attained by the mythic imagination is transferred to the power of reason to form the whole of things in thought. How might this process be comprehended? If it can be comprehended, we can gain some insight into why metaphysics is a perennial project of the human spirit. Once reason arises within human experience it can never be confined to a purely critical function. Reason always seeks to exercise its speculative powers. I wish to suggest further that the speculative use of reason easily and naturally incorporates the distinct human capacity of humor that is not found in metaphysics based on reflection and criticism. My remarks on these topics may be best described as meta-metaphysical. They are metaphysical only in the sense that metaphysics, as A. E. Taylor says, like philosophy itself, takes its own nature as a problem.²

Poetic Wisdom and Reason

Cicero, in *De finibus*, considers the claim of Epicurus, that pleasure is the Chief Good and pain the Chief Evil. He says Epicurus sets out to prove this as follows: “Every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil, and so far as possible avoids it. This it does as long as it remains unperturbed, at the prompting of Nature’s own unbiased and honest verdict.” Cicero remarks: “Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to *prove* that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided.”³

For Epicurus it is enough simply to draw attention to such truths; they need not be proved by elaborate argument. Epicurus holds there is a difference “between formal syllogistic proof of a thing and a mere notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.” But Cicero says there are other philosophers with whom he has some agreement that claim pleasure is not the Chief Good. They advance a great array of reasons that pleasure is not to be regarded as a good or pain as an evil. To establish this claim Cicero says “in their view it requires elaborate and reasoned argument, and abstruse theoretical discussion of the nature of pleasure and pain.”⁴

Whether or not we agree with Epicurus, we can observe that instinct manifested as impulse establishes a primary sense of the nature of things as governed by opposites. We act through opposition. Cicero’s Epicurus hopes to avoid the giving of bad reasons by embracing what we believe on instinct. But the other instinct that Bradley notes is also present—the impulse to produce reasons. Not only is sensation natural to human beings—reason is also. Bodily instincts are not unique to human beings but the instinct to give reasons *is* distinctive to human beings, and the giving of reasons, pursued to its ultimate limits, results in speculative metaphysics.

Whether we agree with Epicurus’s doctrine of sensation, or support the Stoic criticism of it, as Cicero is inclined to do, human instinct functions through opposites. Impulse in one direction necessitates action against or in contrast to another direction. Experience is oppositional. At the level of sensation and feeling we live in a world of benign and malignant forces. The direct expression of these forces takes the form of myth. The mythic image portrays the interaction of darkness and light, life and death, pleasure and pain, power and subjugation, and so forth. The primal myth (by which I mean creation myth as separate from socio-cultural myth) is the expression of the world as felt and guided by instinct. In the narrative of the myth oppositions are not resolved. They are held before the mind in the myth and acted out in ritual.

The world of sensation and instinctive action in myth and ritual is given form in the imagination. What occurs within the stream of life is brought to light in the protean forms of the human spirit. Once the occurrences of life take on the forms of expression of spirit all oppositions become organized around the opposition between sacred and profane. This opposition makes possible a transformation from the single plane of the sensible to the supersensible. The apprehension of the sacred as both in and beyond the world as sensed introduces within the world of mythic expression the beginning of religion and what in metaphysical terms becomes the distinction between appearance and reality.

Vico, in presenting his doctrine of "poetic wisdom" (*sapienza poetica*) in the *New Science*, gives an account of the appearance of the supersensible.⁵ Following the universal flood, the sons of Noah become sons of the earth through generations of their offspring over two centuries, while the world dries out. Originally they are men of ordinary stature, but over the generations their offspring gradually become giants, and they disperse and roam the great forests of the earth. As their bodies increase in size, their capacity for thought decreases. The three principles that distinguish humanity—religion, marriage, and burial—disappear. The descendants of Noah become feral, living from moment to moment in a world of passing sensation. Without the power of language to fix the meaning of objects in their world, these *giganti* regard every facial expression as a new face.⁶ For them there is no firm division between the earth and sky. The sky is no farther than the treetops. There is no community, no human place of gathering within the continuous trackless forests. It is not the state of pity and compassion that Rousseau later claims as original and natural. It is more Hobbes's state in which life is "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."⁷ Unlike the first men of either Hobbes or Rousseau, Vico's *giganti* do not come together through a covenant or contract.

With nothing before their minds, the *giganti* are confronted suddenly with a new phenomenon, a new and completely different sensation. The world, having become sufficiently dry, emits thunder and lightning. Vico's first men—otherwise without fear, except as an animal instinct in response to specific threat of danger—suddenly experience terror (*spavento*) as an inner passion, a sensation that shakes their very existence. In imitation of the sound of thunder they cry out *pa*, which they double as *pape*.⁸ They now respond to the sky as an alterbody, a being beyond themselves, different in kind.

From their first sounds they articulate the first word: Jove. The terror for which they now have a named object causes them to flee out of the sight of Jove and enter caves. They form marriages out of shame (*pudore*)—the second emotion that they feel for the first time. In Vico's passions of the soul, fear and shame are the keys to civil life.⁹ Some of the giants remain wandering, unable to experience these passions, but those who do, become the fathers of the first families.

They cut clearings in the forest and build altars from which to take the auguries of the actions of Jove in the sky. From these clearings eventually come cities, and the offspring of those who remained feral become clients of the founders of families and their descendants. The difference between the patricians and the plebeians develops. In this way the giants became the founders of the gentile nations that mark the beginning of history.

In semiotic terms Jove becomes the first name in that, prior to uttering “Jove,” each instance of thunder is a unique event, in the abovementioned sense that every facial expression is a new face. Once thunder has a name each instance of thunder can be found again in the name. The immediacy of the stream of sensations becomes mediated and the knower comes into existence as separate from the known. Once one thing can be named the knower possesses the power of the name and all in the world can be named. The world then becomes full of gods as each thing is named. For the world to come into existence, the sky must become separated from the earth, and this cosmic separation has a parallel with the separation of the knower from the known.

Below language is the gesture, the universal medium of meaning. When we find ourselves in a situation where language cannot be used we resort to gesture. When two people do not have a language in common their only recourse is to attempt to convey necessary meanings through gesture. When we find ourselves in a noisy room where speech cannot be heard, we communicate a simple point across the room by gesture. Meaning is originally achieved by two types of gesture: indicative (pointing out) and imitative (acting out). What is meant can be pointed to. Pointing is a repetitive gesture, unvaryingly applied to different objects. Pointing, then, has the difficulties ascribed to ostensive definition—that one does not clearly know what aspect of the object is intended. Pointing holds the object at a distance. Imitation takes the thing meant up into the medium of the body and attempts to create a bond with what is meant. Imitative gestures are primordial sign language.

These two types of gesture correspond to two fundamental uses of articulate language—discursive and “depictive” or imagistic. Discursive, in its rudimentary sense of *discursus*, is a coursing through of the contents of a thing, a running up and down and about. Imagistic fits with the dictum—*ut pictura poesis*—a poem is a picture. In the image, language is used to remake the thing in the medium of words. Poetic language fits the thing into a world of meanings, and the poetic image loses its value if dissolved into a literal or referential sense of the thing.

Vico’s poetic wisdom fits the ancient definition of wisdom that Cicero records: “wisdom [*sapientia*] is the knowledge of things divine and human and acquaintance with the cause of each of them.”¹⁰ From their practice of the “science in divinity” (*scienza in divinità*) the founders of the first families form a knowledge of Jove, and through the development of language they form a

knowledge of government.¹¹ What Vico calls “poetic” we would today call “mythic.” Myth is always a true story. Like the sensations they form, all myths are true. The guiding trope of myth is metaphor, and every metaphor is a myth, a fable in brief. Irony is not possible at the level of myth, for irony presupposes a speculative sense of truth and error. Irony states a truth by claiming its opposite. Irony is the philosophical trope. Although poetry in its modern sense as a type of literature plays upon mythic archetypes, irony is available to it. Hence the poetry of which Vico speaks is myth, not poetry in a modern sense.

In an addition to his *New Science* concerning the reprehension of the metaphysics of Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke, Vico criticizes modern metaphysics as it develops from Descartes, on the basis that supposition cannot provide a true starting point for a knowledge of being and that certainty alone is insufficient as a standard for knowledge.¹² To suppose things to be other than they appear to be, and in this process of doubt to have reason turn back upon itself, results in certainties, but these certainties as first principles are vacuous. They do not generate a knowledge *per causas*. To obtain a metaphysic from them all sorts of uncertainties must be attached to them, for which no ground is adduced. Having once asserted with certainty that the I exists as a thinking thing, Descartes incorporates into this assertion a definition of thinking for which no proof is given.

Vico offers another conception of the starting point of metaphysics. He states: “the metaphysics of the philosophers must agree with the metaphysic of the poets, on this most important point, that from the idea of divinity have come all the sciences that have enriched the world with all the arts of humanity: just as this vulgar [poetic] metaphysic taught men lost in the bestial state to form the first human thought from Jove, so the learned must not admit any truth in metaphysic that does not begin from true *Being*, which is God.”¹³ Vico resolves the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry in one stroke by making poetry, that is, myth, the necessary precursor and beginning point for philosophy. The theological poets, as Vico calls the formulators of myth, are not philosophers, nor do they formulate rational truths. Their images of Being, however, are the *archai* from which the science of metaphysics must begin. Vico is right, for philosophy itself in the hands of the Pre-Socratics originates through the transformation of mythopoeic similes into logical analogies.

The Homeric similes, as Bruno Snell says in *The Discovery of the Mind*, describe a slice of life in motion. They are based on verbs: “Athena *gilds* Odysseus with grace, Odysseus *drills* the trunk into the eye of the Cyclops . . . Hector is likened to a lion, the enduring hero stands like a rock in the waves, etc.” In contrast, Empedocles does not purport simply to show us a brief representation of life. He aims in his metaphors at bringing out identities that show universal characteristics, a property not of a particular man, but of man. “The nucleus of Empedocles’ similes is a *tertium comparationis*; they make sense only as precise

statements of what both units of the comparison have always exactly in common.”¹⁴ For example, in comparing the properties of a lantern to the pupil in a human eye Empedocles is concerned to grasp the universal properties of light.

Descartes’ act of refounding metaphysics through the reflection of reason onto itself requires philosophy to forget its own origins, to give up the identity it has made for itself through centuries of transposing the love of myth into the love of reason. In the Hegelian fragment, “The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism,” poetry is called “the teacher of mankind” (*Lehrerin der Menschheit*) and it advocates a “mythology of reason” (*Mythologie der Vernunft*).¹⁵

In the well-known claim concerning the origin of philosophy in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle connects philosophy to myth: “it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g., about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and the stars, and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.”¹⁶

Aristotle suggests that philosophy and mythology have wonder (*thauma*) as a common point of departure that grows from an initial difficulty (*aporia*). For the philosopher this is a difficulty because of conflicting arguments. Wonder is the basis of dialectic. Dialectic is the confrontation of opposites through reason. The mythographer, the lover of myth, is led to myth because of the *aporia* that naturally attends opposites and the power of the mythic image to encompass them. The conflict the lover of myth experiences is a clash between forces, between gods, between gods and men, between man and events in nature, between what is benign and what is malignant. Myth does not explain the wonders it records through its images; it allows us to stand in amazement at them and experience them over and over. Consider the opening lines of the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*:

When there was no heaven,
no earth, no height, no depth, no name,
when Apsu was alone,
the sweet water, the first begetter; and Tiamat
the bitter water, and that
return to the womb, her Mummu,
when there were no gods—¹⁷

We come to myth out of wonder, but wonder is not the primary passion through which myth is originally made and through which the first proto-humans are hu-

manized. The power of the mythic image is generated through terror, through the break in being of the thunderous sky.

Read in Vichian terms, Aristotle's view suggests that the wonder at the basis of the love of myth takes us to the wonder at the basis of the love of wisdom. The mythic or poetic image, the metaphor, is the first response to the difficulty that produces wonder, but wonder pursued further leads to the exercise of reason. The oppositions embraced in the mythic narrative at the hands of the lover of wisdom become the *elenchos*—the process of dialectic in which what is originally joined in the metaphor is then subjected to the device of the question.

The trope of dialectic is irony. In ironic speech the opposite of what is meant is affirmed. The mind capable of recognizing irony realizes that what is meant is the opposite of what is said. As in the intellectual device of dialectic, we are faced in an ironic statement with considering two senses of a thing. Why should a truth not be simply affirmed outright by direct statement of it? What is gained by irony? The ironic statement, like the dialectical discourse, forces us to think twice—as Joyce says, “two thinks at a time.”¹⁸ What is meant is meant through its opposite. When Mark Anthony says, in *Julius Caesar*, addressing his “friends, Romans, and countrymen” concerning the assassination of Caesar: “For Brutus is an honourable man, / So are they all, all honourable men,”¹⁹ we are placed between the opposites of honorable and dishonorable. We are a middle term. Dishonor is not monologic. It is grasped in confrontation with its dialogic opposite. The metaphor, as the trope of myth as well as the trope of the beginning point of metaphysical thought, is also not monologic; it is giving the name of one thing to another, finding similarity in dissimilars. The metaphor does not contrast one thing to another; neither does it synthesize them into one. The metaphor allows the mind to have before it—to use another of Joyce's terms—a “twone.”²⁰ The metaphor does not dissolve the identities of what it brings together; it brings together what was apart and gives the mind a new sense of things, a new starting point from which to consider other things.

Metaphysics will always be the production of bad reasons in that the *aporia* between opposites is only bridged by reason, it is never ultimately eliminated. We engage in metaphysics, not out of human strength but out of our weakness, our inability fully to know. There is always more before the mind than there is in it. The really real (*to ontos on*) is always just beyond the mind's grasp, causing the passion of wonder and continuing to generate our propensity toward metaphysics.

Metaphysics as Myth Remembered

If we ask what is metaphysics, based on what has been said so far, the answer is *metaphysics is always myth remembered*. The first metaphysics is poetic metaphysics

or myth. The world is made accessible to human beings through their power of imagination to emerge from the immediacy of sensation into a world mediated by the power of symbolic forms. In accord with Lévi-Strauss, we can say that totem animals are not good because they are good to eat but because they are good to think. Lévi-Strauss says: "there is simultaneous production of myths themselves, by the mind that generates them and, by the myths, of an image of the world which is already inherent in the structure of the mind."²¹ The world of the mythmaker, like the world of the child, is not accomplished by the conscious pursuit of rationality. Its distinctive feature is the formative power of the imagination. But once we have passed through childhood we can never be children again. Once the world of the mythmaker is succeeded in culture it does not come again. Metaphysics, like poetry, is the attempt to recapture what is lost.

In the last words of *Modes of Thought* Whitehead joins philosophy with poetry. "Philosophy is akin to poetry, and both of them seek to express that ultimate good sense we term civilization. In each case there is reference to form beyond the direct meanings of words. Poetry allies itself to metre, philosophy to mathematic pattern."²² We may add to this Hegel's sense of art, in his fragment "Über Mythologie, Volkgeist und Kunst," where he declares Memory (Mnemosyne) to be the "absolute Muse [*die absolute Muse*]." The work of the artist recalls what is originally made in the mythology of a people. It recalls a time when the imagination actually made human culture and was not simply a power to reflect culture. Hegel warns: "When in our time the living world does not form the work of art within it, the artist must place his imagination in a past world; he must dream a world, but the character of dreaming, of not being alive, of the past is plainly stamped on his work."²³

Poetry, as Whitehead puts it, attempts to recover this world of the origin by allying itself to meter, and metaphysic attempts this recovery by employing mathematical pattern that is a hallmark of reason. The sense of the whole that is present in metaphysical thought is originally supplied to the human spirit by the primal myth, but once the living world does not form the myth within it we must discover a way to remember it. As Vico says, the first science to be learned should be mythology.²⁴ The ultimate good sense upon which civilization depends resides in the cultivation of such memory. How then are we to regard memory in this sense?

In *On Memory* Aristotle describes memory in the sense of recollection: "when one wishes to recollect, that is what he will do: he will try to obtain a beginning of movement whose sequel shall be the movement which he desires to reawaken. This explains why attempts at recollection succeed soonest and best when they start from a beginning."²⁵ We may add to this sense of recollection Vico's threefold description of it in the *New Science*: "Memory thus has three different aspects: memory [*memoria*] when it remembers things, imagination [*fan-*

tasia] when it alters or imitates them, and ingenuity [*ingegno*] when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship. For these reasons the theological poets called Memory the mother of the Muses."²⁶ Metaphysical memory is the reconstruction of what otherwise would be lost in time. It preserves and extends our sense of the real that is had only in a glimpse, like Dante's glimpse of the *diletto* monte as he begins his journey toward the ultimate reality of *Paradiso*.

To regard metaphysics as myth remembered is also to regard a metaphysic as an intellectual *Theatrum mundi*, a theater of the world in which all elements of the world have a place. It is also to regard a metaphysics as narrative, a *vera narratio* that is achieved through speculative reason rather than through the actions of gods and heroes. It is to regard any metaphysic as a type of literature. Collingwood claims, in his chapter on "Philosophy as a Branch of Literature" in *An Essay on Philosophical Method* that philosophy is prose interrupted by poetry.²⁷ Metaphysical texts are combinations of discourse punctuated by metaphors. If we follow Stephen Pepper, each metaphysic is a world hypothesis generated from one of four "root metaphors" (root metaphor being itself a metaphor)—that the world is like a process of formation, or a mechanism, or a historic event, or an organism.²⁸ Within any metaphysical text we find the specific use of metaphors, which we are trained to overlook, believing that only arguments count in terms of what the text is truly about. We enter a metaphysical text as we enter a theater and a narrative, to be taken along by the author and shown the essential contents of the world.

In claiming that metaphysics is myth remembered I do not intend that the author of a metaphysics consciously aims to rewrite a primal myth in terms of a rational discourse. I intend that metaphysics, like myth, responds to two requirements of the human soul—to provide a comprehension of the whole and to provide a comprehension within the whole of the interrelation of opposites, including the opposition between the human and the divine, or, in modern terms, among the human, the natural, and the divine.

Metaphysics, as Hegel points out in "Who Thinks Abstractly?," causes our common-sense conception of the world to walk on its head. He says: "For *metaphysics* is a word, no less than *abstract*, and almost *thinking* as well, from which everybody more or less runs away as from a man who has caught the plague."²⁹ It is common sense which reduces the reality of things to a single feature of them. Metaphysics attempts to return thought to a grasp of the internal reality of things. It attempts to act against what Whitehead called "vacuous actuality."³⁰ To use Hegel's metaphor, the metaphysician unbuttons his "metaphysical overcoat" and lets loose "the flashing star of wisdom."³¹ Another way to put the problem one faces in engaging in metaphysics is what Ibsen said of the artist: "To live is to war with the trolls."³² The metaphysician, as I understand him, is an artist of reason.

What the metaphysician shows us is a world not made for doing business—and it is shocking. To use a distinction of Whitehead's *Function of Reason*, the ordinary thinker can understand the reason of Ulysses, a reason that is clever and can approach any problematic situation and work out a course of action to achieve a solution. But there is also the reason of Plato, the reason of speculative thought that takes us beyond appearance to see with the mind's eye what is beyond the bodily eye.³³

Consideration of the connection between myth and metaphysics contains the answer to the question of why human beings create metaphysics—why it is an enterprise that the human spirit finds it cannot avoid, even if all its reasons are in the end bad reasons. Lévi-Strauss says in his *Introduction to a Science of Mythology* that myth and music “are instruments for the obliteration of time.”³⁴ From what has heretofore been said, metaphysics may be added to this claim as a third term. Myth as an archaic ontology found in primitive or traditional societies is a response to the potential “terror of history.”³⁵ There are two kinds of time—the time of the origin of things, in which the power of the real is concentrated, and the time of history, of events that occur in a sequence of simply one thing after another. The terror of the thunderous Jove initiates the ground from which to confront the terror of history.

The time of the origin, the time before time, so to speak, is time as a cycle. Events repeat themselves. Their patterns do not change in essence. These patterns are reflected in ritual and set forward in the images of the myths. In this cycle the world is continually renewed. The opposites that govern experience come back upon themselves. The myth and the ritual connect to the real, divine order that lies outside the time of human vicissitude—as above, so below.

Metaphysics is the impulse to locate the real from within the world of appearance—to gain as a project of thought and to hold in mind the nature and internal structure of the real. Metaphysics is musical in the sense that music is never to be heard only once. A significant piece of music or a song exists through repetition. It can be heard over and over again, each time in a slightly different sense. A significant metaphysic, once stated, is read and reread, argued out, refined and interpreted, often over centuries. Metaphysical systems are never refuted; they are abandoned out of fatigue.

The terror of history is the opposite of the music of the spheres. Historical or chronological time is time-measured, everyday-time, time-by-the-clock. One event simply leads to another. The doctrine of historicism embraces this sense of time and illuminates it but does not produce an answer to the question: what is the meaning of the sequence, the meaning of history? The answer is conceived only in the broadest terms—as growth or progress or an advance in freedom, all of which contain some truth but do not reduce the impulse to obtain a grasp of Being beyond the sequence.

Even if the terror of history is simply embraced as the doctrine of “deconstruction” or results in the “hermeneutics of suspicion,” the impulse to metaphysics remains—the need to deny time from within time. The need to achieve a reference point outside of time is shared by the primitive ontology that resides in myth and that of the metaphysical use of reason to grasp the real. As Eliade puts it: “Hence it could be said that this ‘primitive’ ontology has a Platonic structure; and in that case Plato could be regarded as the outstanding philosopher of ‘primitive mentality,’ that is, as the thinker who succeeded in giving philosophic currency and validity to the modes of life and behavior of archaic humanity.”³⁶

We know ourselves through memory. To have a self is to have an autobiography, to be able to recover our reality, to comprehend our self in terms of our causes both natural and moral and the occasions of fortune. Cassirer, in *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms*, regards work (*Werk*) in the sense of what is made (in the sense that we speak of an “artwork”) as one of three basic phenomena (the two other basic phenomena being the “I” and the “act”) that determine human reality and which are not derivative from any other phenomena. Cassirer says: “know your *work* and know ‘yourself’ *in* your work; know what you do, so you can do what you know. Give shape to what you do; give it form by starting from mere instinct, from tradition, from convention, from routine, from ἐμπειρία [experience] and τρυβή [habituation] in order to arrive at ‘self-conscious’ action—a work in which you recognize yourself as the sole creator and actor.”³⁷ What one makes is what one is. On this view metaphysics is a form of human self-knowledge.

To locate metaphysics along with poetry in memory as recollection is to subscribe to the first sentences of Bacon in his essay “Of Vicissitude of Things”: “Salomon saith, ‘There is no new thing upon the earth.’ So that as Plato had an imagination, that ‘all knowledge was but remembrance,’ so Salomon giveth his sentence, ‘that all novelty is but oblivion.’ Whereby you may see that the river Lethe runneth as well above ground as below.”³⁸ The truly novel is oblivion in that it is never repeated and thus cannot be remembered. To remember is to remake what was, to enact a palingenesis. Metaphysics, like all of the human sciences, acts against forgetting. It is the means whereby we remember the world.

Speculative Metaphysics *versus* Reflective Metaphysics

A second point that Bradley makes in beginning his *Appearance and Reality* concerns the “self-stance” of the metaphysician. He says: “The metaphysician cannot perhaps be too much in earnest with metaphysics, and he cannot, as the

phrase runs, take himself too seriously. But the same thing holds good with every other positive function of the universe. And the metaphysician, like other men, is prone to forget this truth.”³⁹ Especially prone to forget this truth, I think, is the critical philosopher who builds a metaphysics of experience on reflection. In contrast, the dialectical philosopher who bases metaphysics on speculative reason remembers this truth and incorporates it into his thought. Dialectic, with its sense of how opposites attract, repel, and transform themselves into each other, lends itself as a way of thinking that, while serious in its pursuit of truth, also realizes that the absolute standpoint—comprehension of the real—can never be mastered.

Bertolt Brecht says of Hegel that “He had the stuff of one of the greatest humorists among philosophers; Socrates is the only other one who had a similar method. . . . eye twinkling was innate to him, so far as I can see, like a birth defect and he had it until death; without being conscious of it he continuously blinked his eyes like someone with St. Vitus’s dance. He had such humor that he could never think of something like order, for example, without disorder. It was clear to him that right next to the greatest order dwells the greatest disorder. . . . For him concepts were always rocking in a rocking-chair, something that makes a very good initial impression until it falls over backwards.”⁴⁰

Hegel is the speculative philosopher par excellence. To look at one thing is not to look at it truly until one has looked at its opposite. The spaces between the spokes of a wheel are part of the wheel. Next to what fills space is what does not.

Of Hegel’s metaphysics Brecht says: “I once read his book, the ‘Larger Logic,’ as I had rheumatism and could not move myself. It is one of the most humorous works in world literature. It deals with the life of concepts, their slippery, unstable, irresponsible existence, how they revile each other and do battle with knives and then sit themselves down together at dinner as if nothing had happened.” Furthermore, Brecht says, Hegel’s opposites “appear, so to speak, in pairs; each is married to its opposite and they settle their affairs in pairs, that is, they sign contracts in pairs, enter into legal actions in pairs, contrive raids and burglaries in pairs, write books and give affidavits in pairs, and do so as pairs whose members are completely at odds with each other. What order affirms, disorder, its inseparable partner, opposes at once, in one breath where possible. They can neither live without one another nor with one another.”

Hegel realizes that to grasp experience we must always double up. Experience itself is a matter of doubling up, pairing off. In actuality nothing lives alone. Anything is, even to itself, something else—an other. We know ourselves by being our double. We cannot take ourselves seriously when it means thinking that who we are is simply thus and so, because to claim this we must pair up with the rest of ourselves, that which is not thus and so. Brecht con-

cludes: "I have never met a person without a sense of humor who has understood Hegel's dialectic."

As mentioned earlier, we have become accustomed to regarding reflection as the key to metaphysical thought, if not to philosophical thought itself. In the *Science of Logic* Hegel says that ancient metaphysics was founded on the premise that thought could achieve a knowledge of things. He says: "but *reflective* understanding took possession of philosophy [*aber der reflektierende Verstand bemächtigte sich der Philosophie*]." Hegel holds that in modern philosophy "reflection" has become a slogan (*Schlagwort*).⁴¹ Vico coins the term "barbarism of reflection" (*barbarie della riflessione*) to describe the form of thought of the modern world.⁴² Reflection as a manner of thinking in which thought can come back upon itself is associated with modern optics, which has its beginnings in the *Optics* of Roger Bacon. Bacon says there is a kind of perception "which cannot take place by the sense alone, and does not depend on a comparison with previous vision, but without limitation considers the thing present. For its perceptions several things are required and the process is like a kind of reasoning."⁴³

It is a short step from Bacon's conception of this way of seeing as like a kind of reasoning for us to entertain the converse of this proposition: that reasoning is like an optical process carried on internally. Bacon emphasizes reflection as a key to the soul. The soul's knowledge of the divine in its bodily existence "is correctly said to be by reflection."⁴⁴

As moderns we are the offspring of Descartes, who in his *Discourse on the Method* is the historical source in French for the philosophical meaning of *réflexion*.⁴⁵ In part 5 of the *Discourse* Descartes uses the phrase, "après y avoir fait assez de réflexion," in claiming that certain laws that God has established in nature have also been implanted in our minds. "After adequate reflection we cannot doubt that they are exactly observed in everything which exists or occurs in the world."⁴⁶ In his proof for the existence of God in part 4, Descartes employs the term *reflection* in arguing from doubt as part of a proof of his own existence, to the existence of God: "reflecting upon the fact that I was doubting [*faisant réflexion sur ce que je doutais*]."⁴⁷

In a letter written to Antoine Arnauld on July 29, 1648, among objections raised to some of his views in the *Principles*, Descartes writes: "we make a distinction between direct and reflective thoughts corresponding to the distinction we make between direct and reflective vision, one depending on the first impact of the rays and the other on the second." Descartes says the simple thoughts of infants are direct and not reflective, such as when they have feelings of pain or pleasure originating in the body. Reflection can occur in adults. "But when an adult feels something, and simultaneously perceives that he has not felt it before, I call this second perception *reflection* [*hanc secundam perceptionem reflexionem appello*], and attribute it to the intellect alone, in spite of its being so

linked to sensation that the two occur together and appear to be indistinguishable from each other.”⁴⁸ In this passage Descartes draws the analogy that is the basis of the modern conception of reflection. He compares the reflection of light in perception, the subject of optics, with reflection in the intellect, the subject of mental philosophy.

Kant’s critical philosophy is the successor to Descartes’ methodological use of reflection as a means to certainty. Descartes employs reflection from his rationalist position in metaphysics. Kant equates philosophy itself with reflection. He establishes the firm connection between reflection and the nature of the Understanding (*Verstand*). In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant states: “The act by which I confront the comparison of representations with the cognitive faculty to which it belongs, and by means of which I distinguish whether it is as belonging to the pure understanding or to sensible intuition that they are to be compared with each other, I call *transcendental reflection*.”⁴⁹ Transcendental reflection is the proper operation of the Understanding, of the knowing subject delineating the conditions of its own knowing so that its powers to sense the object are held in proper relation to its powers to form logically what is sensed. Transcendental reflection is a synonym for critique.

Kant was greatly interested in Johann Heinrich Lambert’s *Neues Organon*, published in 1764, in which he advocated a science of “phenomenology, or the doctrine of appearance.” Lambert called this phenomenology a *transzendente Optik*. This optics allows us to see through the forms of appearance, avoid error, and employ human understanding. On September 2, 1770, Kant wrote to Lambert: “A quite special, though purely negative science, general phenomenology (*phaenomenologia generalis*), seems to be presupposed by metaphysics. In it the principles of sensibility, their validity and their limitations, would be determined, so that these principles could not be confusedly applied to objects of pure reason, as heretofore almost always has happened.”⁵⁰ In a letter to Marcus Herz dated February 21, 1772, Kant wrote he planned to produce such a general phenomenology as the first part of a metaphysics.⁵¹ Kant did not carry through his plan as such, but the sense of optics is carried on into critique as a doctrine of transcendental reflection.

To approach the real through reflection is to see through a glass darkly, albeit with certainty of what is seen. The real itself remains a thing-in-itself, removed from our mind’s eye. Speculative reason, as opposed to reflective reason, attempts to see the real face-to-face. Its optics is one of seeing *per speculum*, of spying out or seeing into what is, to seeing beyond appearance as opposed to seeing with certainty what is seen and thus producing a metaphysics of experience as opposed to a metaphysics of the real or the divine.

The attraction to certainty that Kant’s blessed isle of the Understanding offers instead of the adventure offered by the fog banks of illusion that surround

this isle is tied to a timidity of soul, a fear of error, a desire for continued and complete security of thought. To attain this security the mind must take itself seriously. It must remain carefully optimistic and be ever at work, shoring up its distinctions and ramifying their connections. It must not become melancholic or ironic about its project. Reflective thinking requires seriousness of purpose and vigilance so that nothing rash is considered or embraced.

Along with seriousness of mind comes respectability, the opposite of poetry. Poetry is never respectable because it upsets language. It, like metaphysics, directs vision into the nature of things; it causes its audience to stand on their heads and see differently. This sense of reversal and insight leaves speculative thinking open to humor. Humor has us see the opposite, see into things in a way other than we believe they are. Certainty is placed in relation to its opposite, uncertainty. Reflective reason aims always to separate truth from error, not to present their connection in which all truth is partial error and all error is partial truth. The truth that reflective reason or the Understanding seeks is a monologic or single, correct version of things. Reflective apprehension of things is always one-eyed.

The philosophical mind, tied fast to the power of reflection and its optics, is comparable, I think, to that of Jorge, the librarian who hides from the world the lost work of Aristotle on comedy, in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. Jorge says: "laughter [*il riso*] is weakness, corruption, the foolishness of our flesh. It is the peasant's entertainment, the drunkard's license. . . . laughter remains base, a defense for the simple. . . ." ⁵² Reflective, critical philosophy seems to be proper philosophy—for the same reason people took Jorge seriously—his overall grimness. William, the hero and protagonist, in confronting the grimness of Jorge says to Jorge that he would like to lead him around, naked, "with fowl's feathers stuck in your asshole and your face painted like a juggler and a buffoon. . . . I would like to smear honey all over you and then roll you in feathers, and take you on a leash to fairs, to say to all: 'He was announcing the truth to you and telling you that the truth has the taste of death, and you believed, not in his words, but in his grimness [*tetraggine*].'" ⁵³

The problem with conducting our reasoning concerning the real solely through reflection is that it is a closed circle. It comes back upon itself and secures its results as an island of certainty. It does not move the mind to what is beyond its own powers. Reflection will not take the risks that both Descartes and Kant warn us against taking in our thoughts. They tell us not to be like knights-errant, attempting feats beyond our powers to complete. In *The Name of the Rose*, William says "Jorge feared the second book of Aristotle [that on comedy] because it perhaps really did teach how to distort the face of every truth, so that we would not become slaves of our ghosts. Perhaps the mission of those who love mankind is to make people laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh* [*fare ridere la*

verità], because the only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from insane passion for the truth.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

Critical reflection, practiced as the sum and substance of philosophy generally and of metaphysics specifically, makes us “become slaves of our own ghosts.” The transcendental method offers us just the principles of our own knowledge of the object. It does not offer us the truth of ourselves—self-knowledge. Truth pursued in a one-eyed, monological fashion offers us a kind of rational madness, a process of constant argument and terminological refinement—the attempt to prove without question whatever the argument is about, and to make its terms infallibly clear. In philosophy, argument is a paltry thing, in that for any argument, no truth is reached that cannot, by the further application of human wit, be challenged by a counter argument, in an unending chain of critical thoughts.

In Hegel’s terms, the philosophical or metaphysical sentence has an internal motion within it—unlike the reflective sentence.⁵⁵ The reflective sentence joins its subject with its predicate. The copula connects them together but leaves what is connected in a still-standing position. In the speculative sentence we grasp the meaning of the subject as residing in the predicate. But once the predicate is grasped, its meaning points us back to its relation to the subject. This circular motion is not a simple return because the meaning of the subject is now altered by this process. In this movement we see further into the inner form that the subject and the predicate share. Reflective discourse holds us at a distance. Speculative discourse pulls us into the actuality of what it expresses. The circle of speculative discourse always passes beyond itself in a spiral. The circle of reflective discourse is always completing itself, closing in on itself.

The metaphysician, I think, must transcend the ghosts that the mental optics of reflective reason produce and attempt speculative vision. In so doing the metaphysician must attempt to grasp in language the unseen in the seen. This aim is driven by wonder. Wonder takes us beyond the certainties of thought that reflection produces. Wonder is tied to not taking oneself seriously because to wonder causes us to let go of the world of experience as certified by our rational understanding. To wonder is to see into or beyond what is there for us, into what is in-itself. We cannot reach Being by hypothetical thinking. Being must be apprehended in a face-to-face manner. Dialectic is the basis for not taking ourselves seriously because it forces us to question our own mastery of the world as it appears. Not taking oneself seriously is the key to approaching metaphysics with a sense of humor, to accepting a level of incongruity, incoherence, and paradox in the human condition and within human experience taken as a whole.

Laughter, as we know from Aristotle, is a distinctively human capability. Man, Aristotle says, “is the only animal that laughs.”⁵⁶ Humor allows metaphysics to come alive as a human enterprise and to think in a manner so as to instruct, delight, and move. With these properties metaphysical discourse is a lively form of speech. Metaphysics shares with poetical discourse, and with mythical narrative that has gone before poetical discourse, the exercise of human imagination which it connects to reason. Metaphysics as myth remembered begins in wonder, and in its speculative form it adds humor to wonder—the two human passions that motivate metaphysics as an art of thinking beyond the sheltered and secure isle of our understanding.

Notes

Introduction: On Philosophical Tetralogy

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), pars. 413–17.
2. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), par. 1106.
3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1958), 157 (B138).
4. On Vico and Joyce see Donald Phillip Verene, *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).
5. Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 132.
6. Vico, *Autobiography*, 200.
7. Vico, *Autobiography*, 138–39 and 154.
8. Vico, *New Science*, par. 7.
9. Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. Elio Gianturco (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 4.
10. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 348–49.
11. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (New York: Penguin, 1981), 71–72.
12. Vico, *Autobiography*, 120.
13. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim, 3 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953–1957); and vol. 4, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms*, ed. John Michael Krois and Donald Phillip Verene, trans. John Michael Krois (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996).
14. On the *universale fantastico* see Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), chap. 3 and *Knowledge of Things Human*

and *Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 182–91.

15. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 20; Vico, *Study Methods*, 77; Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944), 1; James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 9th printing (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1927), 24.

16. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 693.

17. R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 31.

18. A. N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Free Press, 1957), 12.

19. Vico, *New Science*, par. 122.

20. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939), 614.26–615.10.

1. The Canon of the Primal Scene in Speculative Philosophy

1. Charles Sanders Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 5–22.

2. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 24 (canto 3, line 9).

3. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), par. 47.

4. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979).

5. Johannes Hoffmeister, ed., *Briefe von und an Hegel*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952), 99–100.

6. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), 842.

7. Friedrich Schiller, "Die Freundschaft," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert in connection with Herbert Stubenrauch, 6th ed., vol. 1 (Munich: Hanser, 1974), 93. On Hegel's use of this poem see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), 6–7.

8. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 61.

9. Giulio Camillo, *L'idea del theatro dell'eccellen. M. Giulio Camillo* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550). On the philosophical significance of Camillo's theater see Donald Phillip Verene, *Philosophy and the Return to Self-Knowledge* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), chap. 4.

10. On Joyce's use of this Vichian dictum see Donald Phillip Verene, *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 20 and n. 47.

11. Hegel, *Logic*, 137–50. For a discussion of Hegel’s “bad infinity” versus “true infinity” see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel’s Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the “Phenomenology of Spirit”* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007), 67–68.
12. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).
13. On Vico’s conception of “imaginative universals” see Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico’s Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), chap. 3 and *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico’s New Science and “Finnegans Wake”* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 182–91.
14. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse, revised by Martin Ferguson Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2002), 6 (1.62–63); Petronius, “Poems,” in *Petronius*, trans. Michel Heseltine (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1997), 408 (*Poet. Lat. Min.*, fr. 27).
15. Vico, *New Science*, par. 349.
16. Hesiod, *Theogony*, trans. Glenn W. Most (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2006), 2–11 (lines 1–203).
17. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 20.
18. F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae: A Study of the Origins of Greek Philosophical Thought*, ed. W. K. C. Guthrie (New York: Harper, 1965), chap. 5.
19. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), 214.
20. Vico, *New Science*, par. 461.
21. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 15–16.
22. Vico, *New Science*, par. 1106; Hegel, *Phenomenology*, pars. 484–87 and 520–26.
23. Vico, *New Science*, par. 469. Vico’s source for this claim is Cicero, *De legibus*, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2000), 444–45 (2.23.59).
24. An earlier version of this essay appeared in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 1 (1987): 135–46, published by The Pennsylvania State University Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

2. Philosophical Pragmatics

1. Plato, *Phaedo* in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 59 (67E 3–4).
2. Plato, *Phaedo*, 71 (81A 1–2).
3. Charles Sanders Peirce, “*Ideas, Stray or Stolen, about Scientific Writing*, No. 1 (An unpublished manuscript),” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 11 (1978): 147–55.
4. Peirce, “*Ideas*,” 152.

5. On the connection between communicative ethics and speculative rhetoric see John Michael Krois, "Peirce's Speculative Rhetoric and the Problem of Natural Law," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 14 (1981): 16–30.

6. Peirce, "Ideas," 152.

7. Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*, trans. John Michael Krois and Azizeh Azodi (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001; 1980); see also *Die Macht der Phantasie: Zur Geschichte abendländischen Denkens* (Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1979).

8. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Über die Möglichkeit einer philosophischen Ethik* in *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 1, 2d ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976), 179.

9. Gadamer, *Ethik*, 181.

10. Plato, *Republic* in *Complete Works*, 1201 (596E).

11. Plato, *Republic*, 1201 (597B).

12. Plato, *Phaedo*, 52 (60C–61C).

13. Cf. Plato, *Apology*, in *Complete Works*, 20 (20B–C).

14. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 430–33 (5.3); Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. H. D. Hicks, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2000), 1:12–13 (1.12); see also 2:326–29 (8.8). For a discussion of the coining of the term *philosopher* see Donald Phillip Verene, *The History of Philosophy: A Readers' Guide; Including a List of 100 Great Philosophical Works from the Pre-Socratics to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008), chap. 5.

15. Plato, *Republic*, 1220–21 (617D–618E).

16. Ann Hartle, *Death and the Disinterested Spectator: An Inquiry into the Nature of Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1986), 34.

17. Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 45–46.

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21. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), par. 20.

22. Plato, *Apology*, 21 (20 D–E).

23. Plato, *Republic*, 1220 (617E).

24. Michel Montaigne, "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1965), 56–68.

25. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

26. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), 46.

3. Putting Philosophical Questions (in)to Language

1. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), 4.
 2. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), par. 5.

3. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 20.

4. Hegel speaks of this in an unpublished manuscript, "Über Mythologie, Volksgeist und Kunst," to be found in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. See the translation and discussion of this passage in Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), 36–38.

5. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 808.

6. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984). On imaginative universals see pars. 34, 204, 210, 403, 809, and 933–34.

7. Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 200. See also Donald Phillip Verene, *The New Art of Autobiography: An Essay on the 'Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

8. Vico, *New Science*, par. 333.

9. Giambattista Vico, "The Academies and the Relation between Philosophy and Eloquence," trans. Donald Phillip Verene, in Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. Elio Gianturco (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 87.

10. John H. Smith, *The Spirit and Its Letter: Traces of Rhetoric in Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988).

11. Cicero, *De oratore, Books 1–2*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2001), 46–49 (1. 14. 63–64).

12. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, Books 6–8, trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2001), 316–17 (8. pr. 15–16).

13. Quintilian, *Institutio*, 316–17 (8. pr. 15–16).

14. Vico, *Study Methods*, 15.

15. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:113 (70b1–5).

16. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 404–8. The tradition of the fourfold conception of tropes is challenged by Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 439–41.

17. Vico, *New Science*, par. 404.

18. One of the few works that considers philosophy in terms of its dependence on images is Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. Colin Gordon (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989).

19. See Verene, *Hegel's Recollection*, chap. 10.

20. For an English translation see H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight 1770–1801* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 510–12.

21. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1942), 13.

22. Aristotle, *Poetics* in *Complete Works*, 2:2334–35 (1459a 5–8).

23. Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study of the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* (New York: Mentor, 1964), 125.

24. Vico, *New Science*, par. 408.

25. Collingwood, *Essay*, 202.

26. Plato, *Letter 7* in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1661 (344C). The quotation is from *Iliad* 7.360.

4. Absolute Knowledge and Philosophical Language

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 11–13.

2. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), 49.

3. This term is taken from the title of chap. 3 of W. H. Walsh, *Metaphysics* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1963).

4. David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 18. For a full picture of Hume see Donald W. Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

5. Plato, *Republic*, trans. F. M. Cornford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 230–31 (516E–517A).

6. Benedict de Spinoza, “On the Improvement of the Understanding,” in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1951), 4–5.

7. George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, ed. Colin M. Turbayne (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), 5.

8. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Complete Works*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:1694–1700 (1072a–1076a).

9. A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Harper, 1957), 525 and 532.

10. For further development of this sense of the Absolute see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007).

5. The Limits of Argument: Argument and Autobiography

1. Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 77 (89D).

2. For a translation of the fragment in which Hegel's term occurs see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), 25–26.

3. Lucian, *Philosophies for Sale* in *Lucian*, trans. A. M. Harmon, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1999).

4. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 137–50.

5. Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 199.

6. Giambattista Vico, "The Academies and the Relation between Philosophy and Eloquence," trans. Donald Phillip Verene, in Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. Elio Gianturco (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 87.

7. For a discussion of the idea of autobiography see Donald Phillip Verene, *The New Art of Autobiography: An Essay on the 'Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), chap. 2.

8. A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Harper, 1957), 20.

9. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1958), 14 (A xxi).

10. Whitehead, *Process*, 395–96.

11. An earlier version of this essay appeared in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26 (1993): 1–8, published by The Pennsylvania State University Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

6. Philosophical Aesthetics

1. Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. Colin Gordon (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), 1.

2. Le Doeuff, *Imaginary*, 1.

3. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (*Reflections on Poetry*), trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954), 78.

4. Plotinus, *Ennead IV*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2004), 416–17 (4.8.7).

5. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1961), 1. My translation.

6. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), pars. 342 and 1107.

7. Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 138–39, 154–55. The other authors are Tacitus, Bacon, and Grotius.

8. “Jurisprudence of the Human Race” is used as the title of Chapter 12 in the first book of Vico’s first edition of the *New Science* (1725); see Giambattista Vico, *The First New Science*, ed. and trans. Leon Pompa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

9. Vico, *New Science*, par. 404.

10. Vico, *New Science*, par. 819.

11. Vico, *New Science*, par. 349.

12. Aristotle, *On Memory*, in *Complete Works*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:718 (451b).

13. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), par. 808.

14. For an English translation see H. S. Harris, *Hegel’s Development: Toward the Sunlight 1770–1801* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 510–12. Hegel makes the same point in the introduction to *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 1:50.

15. For a translation of this fragment see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel’s Recollection: A Study of Images in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), 36–37.

16. The quotations from the “System-Program” are from Harris, *Hegel’s Development*, 510–12, modified in some places.

17. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), 93.

18. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:1236. See also Hegel’s statement that art has ceased to be the highest need of *Geist* in *Aesthetics*, 1:103.

19. Quotations from “Über Mythologie, Volksgeist und Kunst” are from the translation in Verene, *Hegel’s Recollection*, 36–37.

20. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:11.

21. Aristotle, *On Memory*, 715 (450a).

22. See Ted Kooser, *The Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). Kooser was Poet Laureate of the United States, 2004 and 2005.

23. Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 536 (259D).

24. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), 214.

25. On metaphor and simile see Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), pt. 4, chap. 3.

26. See Bruno Snell, "From Myth to Logic: The Role of the Comparison," chap. 9 of *The Discovery of the Mind*, in *Greek Philosophy and Literature*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (New York: Dover, 1962).

27. Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1961), chap. 5.

28. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 112.

29. R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), ch. 5.

30. See Donald Phillip Verene, *The Art of Humane Education* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), and *The History of Philosophy: A Reader's Guide; Including a List of 100 Great Philosophical Works from the Pre-Socratics to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008). An earlier version of this essay appeared in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40 (2006): 89–103, published by the University of Illinois Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

7. Philosophical Memory

1. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 37 and 114; John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894), 146–47.

2. Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, in *Selected Philosophical Works*, ed. Rose-Mary Sargent (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), 96–97 (Bk. 1, aphorism 44).

3. Bacon, *Organon*, 104 (Bk. 1, aphorism 62).

4. Francesco Guicciardini states: "All that which has been in the past and is at present will be again in the future. But both the names and the faces of things change, so that he who does not have a good eye will not recognize them. Nor will he know how to grasp a norm of conduct or make a judgment by means of observation." *Ricordi* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1977), 131. My translation.

5. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

6. Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language [Clavis Universalis]*, trans. Stephen Clucas (London: Continuum, 2006).

7. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (New York: Viking, 1976).

8. Rossi, *Logic*, xv.

9. Joaquin Barceló, "Universal Language and Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 14 (1981): 135–51.

10. Giulio Camillo, *L'idea del Theatro dell'ecceles. M. Giulio Camillo* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550).

11. François Secret, "Les cheminements de la Kabbale à la Renaissance: *Le Théâtre du Monde* de Giulio Camillo Delminio et son influence," *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 14 (1959): 418–36.

12. Camillo's two-stage creation of man accords not with Genesis but with the view of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. See Yates, *Art*, 146–48.

13. Camillo, *L'idea*, 80 (misnumbered in the text as 71).

14. Yates, *Art*, 147–48.

15. Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 46.

16. Camillo, *L'idea*, 7. My translation.

17. Ludwig Tieck, *The Land of Upside Down*, trans. Oscar Mandel (London: Associated University Presses, 1978). Regarding theatrical reversal and Camillo's theater see Richard Bernheimer, "Theatrum Mundi," *The Art Bulletin* 28 (1956): 242–43.

18. Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), chap. 3 and *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), chap. 6.

19. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), par. 31. See also pars. 7, 143, 348, 350, and 905.

20. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 35, 141–45, 161–62, 445, 482, 527, and 542.

21. Vico, *New Science*, par. 142.

22. Vico, *New Science*, par. 495.

23. Vico, *New Science*, par. 1106.

24. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 34, 209, 460, 501, 934–35, 1033, and 1040.

25. See Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985) and *Hegel's Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007).

26. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), par. 808.

27. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, par. 808.

28. G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe III, Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1976), 188–90. My translation.

29. This fragment has been given the title "Über Mythologie, Volksgeist und Kunst." See Eva Ziesche, "Unbekannte Manuskripte aus der Jenaer und Nürnberger Zeit im Berliner Hegel-Nachlass," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 29 (1975), 430–44. The passage, which appears in my translation, is quoted in Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegel's Leben* (Berlin, 1844), 180–81.

30. In this sentence Hegel is playing on the sense of finding (*das Finden*) that is contained in the German word for invention (*Erfindung*).

31. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hegel's Inverted World," in *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), 35–53.

8. Culture, Categories, and the Imagination

1. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim, vol. 1 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), 180–84.
2. Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover, 1953), 90–99.
3. René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 120.
4. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, n.d.; 1917).
5. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel Translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace, 2d rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 154.
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, trans. Forrest Williams (Ann Arbor, Mich.: The University of Michigan Press, 1962), 5.
7. A. W. Levi, “The Two Imaginations,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 25 (1964): 188–200.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck*, trans. G. B. Kerferd and D. E. Walford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 114.
9. A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Harper, 1957), 27–45.
10. P. F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1959), 50.
11. Gilbert Ryle, “Categories,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, new series, 38 (1937–38): 189.
12. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchison, 1949), 314.
13. François Rabelais, *The Works of Rabelais*, rev. trans. Thomas Urquhart and Peter Le Motteux (New York: Tudor, 1963), 202. I thank George Benjamin Kleindorfer for reminding me of the importance of Rabelais for understanding the profundities of academic debate.
14. Descartes, *Discourse*, 1: 113–16.
15. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian, 1959), 27, n. 18.
16. T. D. Weldon, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), 50.
17. See, for example, the issue of *The Monist* 49, no. 1 (1965). The general topic of this issue is “Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology.” See the exchange among Herbert Spiegelberg, V. C. Chappell, and R. M. Chisholm.
18. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences; A Translation of “Les Mots et les choses,”* trans. by the publisher (New York: Vintage, 1973), xv. For Borges’ Chinese encyclopaedia see Jorge Luis Borges, “John Wilkins’ Analytical Language,” in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, trans. Ester Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine, and Eliot Weinberger (New York: Penguin, 2000), 231.

19. Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1956).
20. Quoted in Una Ellis-Fermor, *Masters of Reality* (London: Methuen, 1942), 23.
21. Quoted in Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought*, vol. 12, nos. 2–3 of University of Illinois Studies in Language in Literature (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1927), 4. The quotation is from Samuel Johnson, *Rambler* 125 (1751).
22. Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 10.
23. E. J. Furlong, *Imagination* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961), 20.
24. Edward Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1976), ix.
25. Donald Phillip Verene *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), chap. 3 and *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), chap. 6.
26. Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991).
27. Karl-Otto Apel, *Die Idee der Sprache in der Tradition des Humanismus von Dante bis Vico*, 2d ed. (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975), 320–21.
28. For the differences between Voltaire's and Vico's conception of history see Isaiah Berlin, "The Divorce between the Sciences and the Humanities," *Salmagundi* 27 (1974): 9–39.
29. See Ernesto Grassi, *Humanismus und Marxismus: Zur Kritik der Verselbstandigung von Wissenschaft. Mit texten von Petrarca, Salutati, Landino, Poliziano, Nizolio, Valla und Vico* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1973).
30. Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York: Harper, 1963), 67.
31. On Cassirer's connection to Vico see Donald Phillip Verene, "Vico's Influence on Cassirer," *New Vico Studies* 3 (1985): 105–11.
32. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (London: J. M. Dent, 1947), 146.
33. Quoted by Max Harold Fisch in the introduction to Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 68.
34. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Versuch einer Witterungslehre (1825)" in *Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft, Zweiter Teil*, vol. 40 of *Goethes Sammtliche Werke*, Jubiläumausgabe (Stuttgart and Berlin: F. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, n.d.), 55. My translation. See Cassirer's discussion of this passage in *Goethe und die geschichtliche Welt: Drei Aufsätze* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1932), 147.
35. Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), pars. 125–28.
36. Vico, *New Science*, par. 34.
37. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 236, 331, 391, 401, 405, 508, and 1045.
38. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. *imagination*.
39. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 338, 378, and 700.

40. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 377–84.
41. Vico, *New Science*, par. 193.
42. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Meridian, 1963), chap. 2, esp. sec. 11.
43. Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 45–47.
44. Vico, *New Science*, par. 349.
45. Vico, *New Science*, par. 819.
46. Vico, *New Science*, pars. 245, 294, and 393.
47. On the nature of Vico's axioms see Donald Phillip Verene, *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 172–80.

9. Metaphysical Narration, Science, and Symbolic Form

1. Ernst Cassirer, "Critical Idealism as a Philosophy of Culture," in *Symbol, Myth, and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935–1945*, ed. Donald Phillip Verene (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), 64–91; Cassirer's statement to his seminar students regarding the external world is on 193–95. On Cassirer's philosophy see Donald Phillip Verene, "Cassirer's View of Myth and Symbol," *Monist* 50 (1966): 553–64; "Kant, Hegel, and Cassirer: The Origins of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30 (1969): 33–46; "Cassirer's Concept of Symbolic Form and Human Creativity," *Idealistic Studies* 8 (1978): 14–32; "Cassirer's Philosophy of Culture," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 22 (1982): 133–44; "Cassirer's 'Symbolic Form,'" *Il cannocchiale: Rivista di Studi Filosofici* (Jan.–Sept., 1991): 289–305; "Cassirer's Concept of a Philosophy of Human Culture," in *Symbolic Forms and Cultural Studies: Ernst Cassirer's Theory of Culture*, ed. Cyrus Hamlin and John Michael Krois (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 19–27; and "Cassirer's Metaphysics," in *The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Legacy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Jeffrey Barash (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 93–103.
2. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim, 3 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), 3:xiv–xv.
3. Cassirer, *Symbolic Forms*, 3:202–4.
4. Cassirer discusses the distinction between *Leben* and *Geist* in his essay, "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy," trans. Robert Walter Bretall and Paul Arthur Schilpp, in *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. P. A. Schilpp (Evanston, Ill.: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), 853–80. This essay, which due to Cassirer's death appeared in place of the customary "Philosopher's Reply" in the Library of Living Philosophers volume, contains much of Cassirer's view of Hegel. See also Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, ed. John Michael Krois and Donald Phillip Verene, trans.

John Michael Krois, vol. 4, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 3–111. For commentary on this volume see Thora Ilin Bayer, *Cassirer's Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms: A Philosophical Commentary* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001).

5. Ernst Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form im Aufbau der Geisteswissenschaften," in *Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1956), 175. My translation.

6. Cassirer, *Symbolic Forms*, 2:79, 3:17; 2:61, 3:13.

7. Cassirer, *Symbolic Forms*, 1:4–5; 73–74.

8. See Donald Phillip Verene, "Cassirer's 'Symbolic Form,'" 292–93. Also see Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Das Symbol," in *Philosophische Aufsätze: Eduard Zeller, zu seinem fünfzigjährigen Doctor-Jubiläum gewidmet* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1887), esp. 169–73, 192–93; and Heinrich Hertz, *Die Prinzipien der Mechanik* (Leipzig: F. A. Barth, 1894), 1–3.

9. Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function*, trans. William Curtis Swabey and Marie Collins Swabey (Chicago: Open Court, 1923).

10. Cassirer, *Substance and Function*, 18–26; see also Cassirer, *Symbolic Forms*, 3:pt. 3, ch. 1.

11. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944), 207.

12. See the discussion of this transformation of symbolism in Ernst Cassirer, "The Influence of Language upon the Development of Scientific Thought," *Journal of Philosophy* 39 (1942): 309–27.

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The Author

Donald Phillip Verene is Charles Howard Candler Professor of Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy and director of the Institute for Vico Studies at Emory University. His previous books include *Symbol, Myth, and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935–1945* (ed.); *Vico's Science of Imagination*; *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the "Phenomenology of Spirit"*; *The New Art of Autobiography: An Essay on the "Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself"*; *Philosophy and the Return to Self-Knowledge*; *The Art of Humane Education*; *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"*; *Hegel's Absolute*; and *The History of Philosophy: A Reader's Guide*. He is a fellow of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome.

